PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE,
joint with the
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM
and the
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEPOSITION OF: PHILIP REEKER

Saturday, October 26, 2019
Washington, D.C.
The deposition in the above matter was held in Room HVC-304, Capitol Visitor Center, commencing at 11:03 a.m.

Present: Representatives Schiff, Swalwell, Heck, and Wenstrup.

Also Present: Representatives Engel, Connolly, Maloney, Lynch, Raskin, Malinowski, Meadows, and Perry.
Appearances:

For the PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE:

For the COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM:
For the COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS:

For PHILIP REEKER:

MARGARET E. DAUM, PARTNER
SQUIRE PATTON BOGGS LLP
2550 M STREET, NW
WASHINGTON, DC 20037
THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning, Ambassador Reeker, and welcome to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence which, along with the Foreign Affairs and Oversight Committees, is conducting this investigation as part of the official impeachment inquiry of the House of Representatives. Today's deposition is being conducted as part of the impeachment inquiry.

In light of attempts by the State Department and the administration to direct you not to cooperate with the inquiry, the committee had no choice but to compel your appearance today. We thank you for complying with a duly authorized congressional subpoena as other former and current officials from across the Federal Government have done.

Ambassador Reeker is the Acting Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs and has held this position since earlier this year. Ambassador Reeker joined the Foreign Service in 1992 and has served with distinction in various positions through his long career in public service.

Ambassador Reeker, we are grateful your being here and we thank you for your service. We look forward to your testimony today, including your knowledge of and involvement in key policy discussions, meetings, and decisions on Ukraine that relate directly to areas under investigation by the committees. This includes developments related to the recall of Ambassador Yovanovitch, the President's July 25th, 2019, call with Ukrainian President Zelensky, as well as the documentary record that has come to light about efforts before and after
the call to get the Ukrainians to announce publicly investigations into two areas President Trump asked Zelensky to pursue, the Bidens and Burisma and the conspiracy theory about Ukraine's purported interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.

We'll also have questions about the Department's response to the impeachment inquiry, including the committee's subpoena, which the Department continues to defy, despite the fact that we know it has already collected significant documentary evidence that goes to the heart of our inquiry.

Finally, to restate what I and others have emphasized in other interviews, Congress will not tolerate any reprisal, threat of reprisal, or attempt to retaliate against any government official for testifying before Congress, including you or any of your colleagues. It is disturbing that the State Department, in coordination with the White House, has sought to prohibit Department employees from cooperating with the inquiry and with Congress and have tried to limit what people can say.

This is unacceptable. Thankfully, consummate public servants, like you, have demonstrated remarkable courage in coming forward to testify and tell the truth.

Before I turn to committee counsel to begin the interview, I invite the ranking member, in his absence, a minority member of the Foreign Affairs or Oversight Committee, to make any opening remarks.

MR. MEADOWS: Thank you, Chairman Schiff.

Ambassador Reeker, thank you for being here.
Certainly as we look to today's hearing, it is my understanding, Mr. Chairman, that this is, I guess, a joint deposition. Is that correct?

THE CHAIRMAN: It is of the character I described in my opening statement.

MR. MEADOWS: All right. And so as a joint deposition, one of the concerns I have, as you know, you and I had a very respectful conversation as it relates to the rules, and access to the deposition transcripts is a key component. It is my understanding that you and your staff have access to the deposition transcripts currently. And under the rules, maybe I will quote it here, under paragraph 9 in the rules it says, the chair and the ranking minority member shall be provided with a copy of the transcripts of the deposition at the same time.

And so, Mr. Chairman --

THE CHAIRMAN: Sorry.

MR. MEADOWS: That's all right.

So, Mr. Chairman, in light of the rules, I think it's critically important that if we're going to have fair and equal access and follow the rules, that those deposition transcripts be provided to the minority at the same time.

And to date, it has been very laborious, I think, in a best case scenario, and impossible in a worse case scenario, to have access to those transcripts.

And so I would just bring to the chairman's attention the rules,
and, respectfully, and I mean that respectfully, let's look and see if we can have an accommodation as it relates to the deposition. I just find it very difficult to have sat in over 60 hours of transcribed interviews and then have it be very difficult for me to go back and compare notes or refresh my memory when I've actually been in the depositions.

I'm not saying wide access to those outside of the three committees of jurisdiction, but certainly the three committees of jurisdiction. And under the guidelines that you set forth in your opening statement, I think that would be appropriate.

I respectfully yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think the gentleman.

My understanding is that under the rules the chairman and ranking member, so myself and Mr. Nunes, have access to the transcript in electronic form. All Members of the three committees have access to transcripts in hard copy, but they are not allowed to take the hard copy out of the spaces.

We don't print numerous copies because the very first transcript that the minority was allowed to print was then leaked to a conservative newspaper in very short order.

The point of doing the depositions in closed session -- and as you know, there are almost 50 Republican Members entitled to participate -- is so that witnesses are not influenced by the testimony of others. When transcripts are released, as the transcript of Mr. Volker's testimony was, it obviously undermines the integrity of
the investigation and we're trying to prevent that.

MR. MEADOWS: And undermining the integrity of the investigation is certainly not what I'm suggesting.

And so with that, this is either a joint deposition or it's not. The House rules are very clear. You know full well that this rule was actually not put in place for this type of hearing as much as it was what I call the Issa rule. You were very familiar with that during the Benghazi hearings. It was put in place under a Republican majority, primarily because of the classified nature of those and the desire of Congressman Issa to be part of that.

I'm not asking for a printed copy. I've not seen a printed copy of any transcript. But what I am asking is, is that we're allowed with our staff to go in and review those depositions as we prepare for further witnesses. I think that would certainly be in keeping with the rules. I think it is in spirit with the rules.

My understanding is right now is that we can set up a time and have your staff come in and supervise that. That's not laid out in the rules, Mr. Chairman.

And again, I think when we look at this, it's paragraph 9, paragraph 10. I'm just saying respectfully, let's find a way to make an accommodation. And I'm not asking you to rule right now. Certainly we can have a further discussion off-line.

THE CHAIRMAN: And let's have that further discussion off-line so we don't have to use up the witness' time.

MR. MEADOWS: I'll yield back.
THE CHAIRMAN: We'll see if we can reach an accommodation.

Again, I'm happy to entertain any accommodation that doesn't expose us to the same risk of what happened with the first transcript that was made available.

And of course we have a problem with people willy-nilly ignoring the House rules as we saw when some of your colleagues came into the SCIF the other day.

MR. MEADOWS: Certainly the chairman and this ranking member are both committed to keeping the rules. And so I guess in that spirit is why I'm making the respectful appeal.

THE CHAIRMAN: I thank you.

I will now turn it over to Mr. Goldman to begin the deposition.

MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

This is a deposition of Ambassador Philip Reeker conducted by the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence pursuant to the impeachment inquiry announced by the Speaker of the House on September 24th.

As you know, Ambassador Reeker, the committees had to adjust our schedule due to the memorial events the past two days in honor of our dear colleague, Representative Elijah Cummings. And we appreciate your flexibility in accommodating our schedule in order to conduct this deposition on a weekend.

Ambassador Reeker, if you can now please state your full name and spell your last name it for the record.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: My name is Philip Thomas Reeker,
R-e-e-k-e-r.

MR. GOLDMAN: And if you just want to pull the microphone in a way that makes you comfortable that you just speak and it goes into the microphone. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Got it.

MR. GOLDMAN: Along with other proceedings in furtherance of the inquiry to date, this deposition is part of a joint investigation led by the Intelligence Committee in coordination with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Oversight and Reform. In the room today are majority staff and minority staff from all three committees, and this will be a staff-led deposition. Members, of course, may ask questions during their allotted time as has been the case in every deposition since the inception of this investigation.

My name is Daniel Goldman. I'm the director of investigations for the HPSCI majority staff. And I want to thank you again for coming in today.

Let me do some brief introductions. To my right Nicholas Mitchell. He is the senior investigative counsel for the Intelligence Committee. Mr. Mitchell and I will be conducting most of the interview for the majority.

And I'll now let my counterparts from the minority staff introduce themselves?

MR. CASTOR: Steve Castor with the Republican staff of the Oversight Committee.
MR. GOLDMAN: This deposition will be conducted entirely at the unclassified level. However, the deposition is being conducted in HPSCI secure spaces and in the presence of staff with appropriate security clearances. We also understand that your attorney has her security clearance as well.

It is the committee's expectation that neither questions asked of you nor answers provided by you will require discussion of any information that is currently or at any point could be properly classified under Executive Order 13526. You are reminded that EO 13526 states that, quote, "In no case shall information be classified, continue to be maintained as classified, or fail to be declassified," unquote, for the purpose of concealing any violations of law or preventing embarrassment of any person or entity.

If any of our questions can only be answered with classified information, please inform us of that before you answer the question and we can adjust accordingly.

Today's deposition is not being taken in executive session, but because of the sensitive and confidential nature of some of the topics and materials that will be discussed, access to the transcript of the deposition will be limited to the three committees in attendance.

Under the House deposition rules, no Member of Congress nor any staff member can discuss the substance of the testimony that you provide
today. You and your attorney will have an opportunity to review the
transcript of today's deposition?

Before we begin, I'd like to go over some ground rules. We will
be following the House regulations for depositions, which we have
previously provided to your counsel. The deposition will proceed as
follow. The majority will be given 1 hour to ask questions, then the
minority will be given 1 hour to ask questions. Thereafter, we will
alternate back and forth between majority and minority in 45-minute
rounds until questioning is complete. We will take periodic breaks,
but if you need a break at any time, please just let us know.

Under the House deposition rules, counsel for other persons or
government agencies may not attend. You are permitted to have an
attorney present during this deposition. And I see that you have
brought a personal attorney.

At this time, if counsel could please state her appearance for
the record?

MS. DAUM: Margaret Daum, Squire Patton Boggs, for Ambassador
Reeker.

MR. GOLDMAN: There is a stenographer taking down everything that
is said here today in order to make a written record of the deposition.
For that record to be clear, please wait until each question is
completed before you begin your answer and we will try to wait until
you finish your response before asking you the next question. The
stenographer cannot record nonverbal answers, such as shaking your
head, so it is important that you answer each question with an audible
We ask that you give complete replies to questions based on your best recollection. If a question is unclear or you are uncertain in your response, please let us know. And if do not know the answer to a question or cannot remember, simply say so.

You may only refuse to answer a question to preserve a privilege that is recognized by the committee. If you refuse or object to a question -- refuse to answer or object to a question on the basis of privilege, staff may either proceed with the deposition or seek a ruling from the chairman on an objection. If the chair overrules any such objection, you are required to answer the question.

Finally, you are reminded that it is unlawful to deliberately provide false information to Members of Congress or staff. It is imperative that you not only answer our questions truthfully, but that you give full and complete answers to all questions asked of you. Omissions may also be considered as false statements.

As this deposition is under oath, Ambassador Reeker, would you please now stand and raise your right hand to be sworn?

Do you swear that your testimony here today will be the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do.

MR. GOLDMAN: Let the record reflect that the witness has been sworn.

And you may be seated?

Ambassador Reeker, if you have an opening statement or your
attorney has any matters to discuss before we proceed, now is the time.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have no opening statement.

MR. GOLDMAN: All right. Then I will recognize myself for 60 minutes.

EXAMINATION

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q  Ambassador Reeker, before we get into the substance of today's deposition, we would like to just briefly go through your background.

As we understand, you joined the Foreign Service in 1992. And can you describe for us, generally speaking, some of your foreign posts and your more recent positions?

A  Sure. I joined in 1992 after finishing graduate school. Actually went through the Foreign Service process and joined with the United States Information Agency, which at that time was separate.

My first assignment was to Budapest, Hungary, where I was the assistant information officer or press attache. I moved on then to be the public affairs officer at the U.S. Embassy in Skopje, what is now North Macedonia.

From there, I went back to Washington to become the director of the press office, the Office of Press Relations at the Department of State, and subsequently became the deputy spokesman, first under Secretary of State Albright and then through the transition for 3 more years under Secretary of State Powell.

From there, I went back overseas, returning to Budapest as the
Deputy Chief of Mission from 2004 to 2007. From 2007 to 2008, I served, in Baghdad at the U.S. Embassy there, as the Counselor for Public Affairs to Ambassador Ryan Crocker, working very closely with Ambassador Crocker and General David Petraeus on the so-called surge in that period in Iraq.

I was then nominated to be the United States Ambassador to again what is now called North Macedonia, confirmed by the Senate, and arrived at post in September 2008.

After a normal 3-year tour as Ambassador, in 2011 I was asked to come back and become the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs covering the Balkans, South Central Europe, as it's known, and then later expanded to include Central Europe and the office of Holocaust Initiatives.

And then after that assignment I followed [REDACTED], who had been assigned to Italy, to become counsel general in Milan. I served there from 2014 to 2017, at which time I moved. I had been asked to become the civilian deputy commander of the United States European Command, the U.S. military forces in Europe, serving as deputy to General Curtis Scapparotti, who was at that time the commander of U.S. European Command, based in Stuttgart, and was serving in that capacity as his civilian deputy and foreign policy advisor until in late January I was approached or called by the Department upon the sudden resignation of the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, Wess Mitchell. Secretary Pompeo asked me to come back to Washington to take over
running the Bureau of European Affairs after Wess had departed.

So I -- formally I came back on the 18th of March to be able to
be here for the NATO 70th anniversary ministerial, and then I was
semi-dual-hatted. My technical assignment at European Command ended
at the 26th of May, I believe, but I travel about 50 percent of the
time back and forth to our various posts.

We have, as you know, 50 countries in the European -- under the
European Bureau. That includes 49 missions, including NATO, the
European Union, the OSCE, and 28 consulates or constituent posts as
well. Back here in Washington we have about 300 employees under the
Bureau of European Affairs. I have seven deputy assistant
secretaries, a principal deputy who came on in August and then six more
deputy assistant secretaries, and as I said, about 300 staff here.
Overseas, the Bureau has about 11,500 personnel for which I'm broadly
responsible.

Q Thank you for that background. We are going to focus
primarily on your time as Acting Assistant Secretary in 2019.

A And if I may clarify, I think it's at least worth noting for
the record, I am formally assigned as the Principal Deputy Assistant
Secretary in the Bureau and in that capacity serve as Acting Assistant
Secretary since I'm not confirmed.

Q Understood.

Are you -- prior to testifying here today, did you have
any -- you, yourself, have any conversations with anyone at the State
Department about your testimony?
A The fact that I was doing it?
Q Let's start with the fact -- the fact that you were asked and whether or not you should testify.
A I let my supervisor, my boss, the Under Secretary, David Hale, know, as well as the Office of the Legal Advisor and my principal deputy know. I think I sent an email the night that I received the request to testify. One of my deputies had already testified, George Kent. And I certainly didn't keep it a secret that I'd been asked to -- requested to give a deposition as the email stated. And originally the request was for Wednesday.
Q Did anyone, other than in formal letters to you, did anyone discourage you from testifying?
A No, sir.
Q Did you have any discussions with anyone else about the substance of your testimony?
A No, sir.
Q Are you aware that the committees have subpoenaed the Department for documents related to this investigation?
A I do understand that from the press reporting, yes.
Q Only from the press reporting?
A Yeah, to the best -- well, I know we were -- when this began, I was traveling in Italy on official travel. And I recall that there was -- we needed to at least review files for documents relevant to this, and I understood that my emails were reviewed automatically.
Q Were you asked to collect any documents related to the
subject of this investigation?

A There was a general request. And so, since I was traveling, my assistant went through files. And I really didn't have anything relevant. Everything I had was in email.

Q Okay. And I see you do have a binder of materials here today. Can you just generally describe what's in that binder?

A It's my emails.

Q Your emails.

A Not all of them obviously, because I get upwards of 300 or 400 a day. But it's emails that I thought may be relevant to help me trace and recall.

Q And just for the record, it's a 4-inch binder, it appears that it's quite full of perhaps a couple hundred pages of documents. Is that accurate?

A Yes, that's accurate.

Q And you are aware of --

MR. MEADOWS: 3-inch binder.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q -- are you not, that the Department has not provided the committees with any documents pursuant to the subpoena. Is that right?

A That is my understanding, yes.

Q Have you had any conversations with anyone at the State Department about whether the Department should --

A No, sir.

Q -- produce any documents?
A No, sir.

Q Okay. But you've reviewed the relevant emails prior to testifying here today?

A Well, I've tried to review to the best -- I have a fairly fulsome job. And so in between, in preparing what was initially a short period and then with a couple of extra days, I did try to go through emails just to try to be able to recall and track the general timeline of things that I believe you may be interested in.

Q Okay. And that review, I assume, has helped you prepare for your interview today.

A I think so, yes.

Q Your testimony today.

A I may be able to refer to some of them.

Q So just so you're aware, because we don't have those documents and don't have any documents, we may be asking a lot of questions just to get some of the basics and the foundation. So it may seem basic, it may seem redundant, but we ask your indulgence as we try to determine the facts here.

In addition to emails, did you have any electronic communications, such as WhatsApp messages, related to the topic of the investigation?

A I do have some -- a few pages of WhatsApp, I guess you could -- would that be call a transcript? -- WhatsApp things which I converted to, as we're required to do, converted to archives -- I'm not very technically inclined here -- and sent to my email. So -- and
I think those -- I reviewed those.

Q  And generally speaking, who were those WhatsApp messages with?

A  I think I have four people with whom they are relevant. Masha Yovanovitch. Let me just check to be accurate here. Sorry, I'm being a terrible witness. I apologize. Masha Yovanovitch, Bill Taylor, George Kent, and Kurt Volker.

Q  All right. So you said that in January you were asked by Secretary Pompeo to return to D.C. to take on this new role. Is that right?

A  Specifically, I can't actually find in my calendar the specific day, but I had been in Washington for a chief of mission conference. I was invited to join the European Bureau's chief of mission conference in my capacity as the civilian deputy at European Command where the focus was on trying to integrate defense and diplomacy, our State, DOD, EUCOM, EUR, the European Bureau work. So I was back for that. Returned to Stuttgart.

    And it was several days later. I think it was close to the very end of January, Wess Mitchell had suddenly announced his resignation as Assistant Secretary. And I received a call from him saying: Sorry I didn't tell you this before. And then he suggested I was going to get another phone call because a new idea had come up. And I received that call from the Counselor of the State Department, Ulrich Brechbuhl, who talked to me for a little while and said they were interested in having me come back to take over for Wess.
Could you just move your microphone a little closer to your mouth?

I'm sorry.

You can pull it even closer to you just so you're comfortable. It's a large room.

Lapel mikes or something. That's better. Is that all right? Sorry.

So he suggested that I come back to Washington. In fact, I was scheduled, I think, to come back for something EU COM related. And I did return to D.C. then. I left -- I flew on the 6th of February and on the 7th and 8th I had a variety of meetings, including with Wess Mitchell, with Counselor Brechbuhl, and ultimately a short meeting with Secretary of State Pompeo. They asked me if I would do this. That was their desire, that my new assignment would be to come back and do that.

And so then I returned to Stuttgart on the 9th of February. The Secretary had suggested that I join him, along with Wess, who was of course still in his capacity as Assistant Secretary, on the trip to Central Europe that they took immediately after.

So I went back to Stuttgart, arriving on the 10th of February, changed my suitcase and then went to Budapest to join the Secretary's party on the 11th. We were in Budapest, Bratislava, then Warsaw. Stopped in Brussels later that week. And then the Secretary visited Iceland, Reykjavik, Iceland, and I accompanied on that trip. And then I went from there back to Munich actually on the -- I think it was the
15th of February -- for the Munich security conference in my existing job as EUCOM deputy commander.

Q You mentioned a trip, part of that European swing was to Warsaw. What was in Warsaw? Do you recall?
A In Warsaw there was the Ministerial on the Future of the Middle East and bilateral meetings. I think we were there two nights as I recall.

Q Were you aware that Rudy Giuliani attended that conference?
A I do recall hearing somebody mention that Rudy Giuliani was in town. I do recall that. It had no particular significance to me or to the conference site. But I do recall that I never saw him or met him.

Q How did you hear that he was there? Who told you, do you recall?
A I just remember hearing it in the -- it's possible I may have read it in the press, but I do recall hearing that.

Q Do you know if he met with any employees of the State Department?
A I do not know.

Q When you were asked to take the job, what did you know about Ukraine?
A Well, I mean, I followed some developments in Ukraine. I think I had visited there twice in my life. The first time, in my very first assignment, I went to Kyiv, it must have been 1995, newly independent country from the Soviet Union of course after the collapse
of the Soviet Union. I think that was when the President at that time
made the first visit to independent Ukraine by a U.S. President. I
just worked on the press support.

And then I accompanied Secretary Albright in my capacity as
spokesman, deputy spokesman. I think I must have been Acting at that
point. So traveled with her.

I was, of course, aware of the Russian -- the general current
events in Ukraine and then the Russian, shall we say, invasion,
attempted annexation of Crimea in 2014, our efforts to support Ukraine.

I was aware of the general policy. It wasn't particularly
relevant to my working in Italy, although we often focused on the
sanctions that the United States put in place, helping to explain those
and encourage the support, because the European Union also had put
sanctions in place against Russia because of their invasion of Ukraine,
their occupation of Crimea, and the war that they had started in the
Donbas in the eastern part of Ukraine.

And, you know, the extensive programs we've had, supported and
funded by Congress, to help the Ukrainians over time in terms of their
reforms and development.

And then at EUCOM I was familiar with Ukraine generally.
Obviously EUCOM had a role there in terms of some of the military support
that we were providing. I knew the Ambassador, Masha Yovanovitch. I
knew the previous Ambassador. And that was part of my job at EUCOM,
was to maintain a liaison there.

Q Did you have -- what was your relationship with Ambassador
Yovanovitch like?

A I've known Masha for, I think -- she's been in the Foreign Service longer than I, but, you know, probably 20 years. We both have served in the broad -- broadly same region. When I was nominated and came for my confirmation hearing, we were on the same panel. She was being confirmed for Armenia, to be Ambassador to Armenia. She had already been, I believe, Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan. And so we were on the same panel. We knew each other. We're friends, colleagues.

Q And what was her general reputation as a Foreign Service officer?

A Outstanding. I mean, she's one of the Foreign Service great leaders. Outstanding diplomat, very precise, very -- very professional, considered an excellent mentor, you know, a good leader. And this was, of course, Ukraine was her third ambassadorship. We had served together in the European Bureau when I was Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Balkans and in Central Europe. She was another one of the DAS's. I think she had the Nordic and Baltic portfolio at that time. And then she became the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary and Acting for a period toward the end of my time in the Bureau.

Q Had you ever heard any complaints within the State Department about the job that she was doing as Ambassador of Ukraine?

A No, sir. And at European Command she had an excellent reputation. The commander found her extremely professional and worked closely with her.

Q Soon after your official start date in this role as the Acting
Assistant Secretary, I'm sure you're aware there became a lot of or
there was a lot of publicity related to her and her role in Ukraine
toward the end of March. I assume -- you became aware of that as well
at the end of March, right?

A Yes, sir. I arrived late in the evening of the 17th of March
from Stuttgart. Went home to my apartment and reported to work in the
European Bureau on the 18th.

One of the first tasks that I had at hand, because my
responsibility largely in sort of shepherding this bureau, the large
bureau I described to you, is making sure the personnel issues at the
top level are handled and the -- Masha was coming to the end of her
3-year tour and we needed to find a new candidate, the chief of mission
process, the usual Foreign Service process, which had been conducted
and identified a candidate for nomination.

That candidate had been redirected to a different job and so there
was then an opening. And one of my first tasks was to work within the
Bureau and the bureaucracy to try to identify candidates to
submit -- you know, there is a standard process for this -- to submit
then to what's known as the Deputies Committee that then selects the
Department's candidate, which then goes on to become, after the
appropriate vetting, et cetera, become a nominee.

So we were focused on that. There were two posts that needed
quickly to get new candidates.

Q Were you aware that she had been asked to stay a little longer
than her usual tour?
A. I was aware that that had been considered, because when the candidate, the person that was -- had been selected and was working towards, you know, submitting the necessary papers for nomination was revectored, I had had conversations with Masha about -- you know, timing of confirmation is always a challenge. And I believe Under Secretary Hale had approached her about whether, you know, was she able to stay.

We go through this a lot with a number of our ambassadors in posts. Some have onward assignments, some of them are retiring, some of them have personal reasons. Others, when there's a gap because of, you know, a slow confirmation process we try to see if we can have them carry on. We have a number of posts right now, for instance, that are covered by the deputies in the capacity as Charge d'Affaires pending confirmation of that.

So I know that she had been approached as to the possibility of that certainly in the earlier period.

Q. Was there anything unusual about the reassignment of the other candidate that you are aware of?

A. Look, let me just be very candid, I was that candidate. So I had been approached by Assistant Secretary Mitchell as he was doing the annual chief of mission process, as we call it, and was I interested in any of the jobs that were open or coming open.

To be honest, I was ambivalent because I was extremely happy at European Command. It was a 3-year assignment and I was just finishing the first year of it.
Worked out reasonably well. The commute was tolerable.

But Wess was quite eager and so encouraged me to consider the Ukraine job. And ultimately I was -- I was the candidate and I had gotten as far, December 21st, I recall, just before the Christmas weekend, I got word that the White House had approved moving forward with potential nomination, which means they send you hundreds of pages of documents to fill out.

And I did not do that over Christmas and got through the holiday. And then as I was doing -- starting to work on those forms, and in fact when Wess Mitchell called me, I got a message, you know, Assistant Secretary Mitchell wants to call you. I said, oh, he's calling to say, where do you stand on those forms? And they weren't done, of course. And that's when he said, you know, we have this other -- we would like you to do this instead. So --

Q You said that Wess Mitchell's resignation was somewhat sudden or surprising. Why did you frame it that way?

A I mean, I knew Wess. Wess is a friend, a colleague I have known him even prior to his time as Assistant Secretary. And we had a good rapport. I made sure that he and the commander were well knitted up in terms of the task at hand, that is the integration of State and DOD, diplomacy and defense. And he had expressed a number of times he's got young children and that maybe he was coming toward the end.

So it wasn't a complete surprise that he chose to do that, but
it was unexpected, I guess is the better word. Obviously it was his decision.

Q  But it wasn't from -- as far as you knew, there was no policy or other reason that he --

A  Not that I'm aware of. He always told me he was -- you know, again, little kids and more time with the family.

Q  Are you -- what happened related to Ambassador Yovanovitch after you assumed duty, the duties of this job on March 18th?

A  So that week, of course, there came this sort of avalanche of very, very negative press stories. There was a public prosecutor in Ukraine who was alleging things about the Ambassador. Ukraine was in a highly politicized period prior to their Presidential election.

I had actually been there in my EUCOM capacity, further to the question you started and we got partially through it in terms of any experience I had with Ukraine. I had visited there once with General Scaparrotti for a ship visit, the USS Mount Whitney, that paid a port call in Odessa, probably in the summer, late summer of 2018.

And then in February when I already had -- knew that I had been revectored, I similarly took a trip down for another U.S. ship visit in Odessa and talked to Masha at that time. And we'd had a little conversation about what was she doing, what were her plans. And in fact one of the conversations we had was she expressed an interest in possibly succeeding me at EUCOM, because obviously that job was now suddenly coming open.

And so with her tour ending, you know, in the coming months, in
the summer of 2019, I was quite enthused about that. In fact the commander at EUCOM was also quite enthused about that opportunity. So then this storm of, as I literally arrived in the first days, all of these stories were coming out, lots of press inquiries to the European Bureau press office, to the Department as a whole, allegations of all kinds of what seemed to me very outlandish and unrealistic stories were coming out about this.

And it, you know, became kind of one of these media frenzies, lots of efforts to figure out where is this coming from, what is this about, and the press operation generating, of course, trying to generate responses to the queries from press.

Q Was there internal discussion within the State Department about the allegations themselves against her?

A I discussed with -- primarily with the Counselor, Ulrich Brechbuhl, this, and also with David Hale, the Under Secretary, who is, of course, responsible for all of the -- the Under Secretary for Political or Policy Affairs and oversees all of the geographic bureaus.

And Ulrich did say: Any idea where this is coming from, what this is about? We started sort of trying to look into that, talking to the post, of course to Masha. My deputy for Eastern Europe, which includes Ukraine, George Kent, who is a real expert on the whole region actually, as well as the Caucasus that he covers, and he had been the Deputy Chief of Mission under Masha Yovanovitch until a year prior when he came back to be the DAS, he kind of led and coordinated a look into that.

I did understand from Ulrich that there had been, I think a year
previously or sometime in 2018, a letter from Congressman Sessions
which had criticized Ambassador Yovanovitch and accused her of being
partisan, to which Ulrich said they had never found anything to suggest
any foundation to those allegations.

And he had thought after that that perhaps that had sort of ended,
but clearly this was coming back again. And I believe some of the press
coverage in March referred to that letter from Congressman Sessions.
And in fact, it was -- the letter was released with sort of some not
so great blacking out of the name, but it was clearly that letter from
2018.

Q Did the Department determine whether or not any of the
allegations that came out about Ambassador Yovanovitch at the end of
March had any merit?

A The general -- not even general -- the view was there was
never any proof, was one word that was used, there was no documentation
to suggest this. Ultimately -- and I don't have the full timeline
right in front of me. Ultimately, the Prosecutor, who had alleged that
she as Ambassador had given him a do-not-prosecute list, he ultimately
recanted that. There was never anything to suggest this.

And I think certainly the Counselor underscored that. And I
think efforts were made at his level and with the support of the
Secretary to push back on some of these journalists and their reporting,
to simply ask: Where are you getting this? On what basis are you
writing this or tweeting this? Because, of course, this is common now,
some tweet comes out and then is retweeted with no basis at all and
it generates more questions.

And some of them were really not just highly, highly inaccurate and inflammatory, but threatening also to Ambassador Yovanovitch. And this affects not only, you know, our policy, our standing, the work of the embassy, which was, you know, extremely busy.

It's a large mission with a lot of very hardworking people working on programs to fight corruption, to promote economic reforms, to work on energy diversification, to promote antitrust, and try to help Ukraine emerge from the oligarchical system that has kept them far from their potential, to help them pursue their clearly Western orientation, with obviously fighting literally a hot war on their eastern front from Russia.

All that work is vitally important. That was key to our policy and that was being certainly distracted from. In fact, because the Prosecutor had put out these nasty allegations, these untrue allegations about the Ambassador, and he was known to be close to President Poroshenko, on my third day -- in fact, I guess it would be technically my fourth day -- Thursday, March 21st, with the advice of my Ukraine folks, we called in -- the Ambassador was not available, but -- the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Ukrainian Embassy here in Washington, we called her in to deliver a stern demarche, saying, this was unacceptable, to have Government of Ukraine figures maligning our Ambassador in this way.

Q Who met with the Ukrainian official?
A I did, as the --
Q: Just you?

A: Well, I'm sure I would have had staff with me from the Ukraine --

Q: You were the highest ranking --

A: Yes.

Q: -- Department official?

A: Yes.

Q: You mentioned something about there being follow-on press related to these allegations. Do you know who was amplifying these allegations and accusations in the media around this time?

A: I mean, you can look at all those media reports and they quote a number of people. There was -- Mr. Giuliani, of course, was one of the main voices of this and he, himself, was on air. There was Mr. diGenova, I recall, who was also there and a stream of press reports which then, you know, they sort of feed on each other. And that really was lasting that whole week, and through the next week we continued to be bombarded with this. And I was pushing for responses, what we were going to say about this in terms of the pushing back, defending our Ambassador and our mission there.

Q: Who did you have those conversations with?

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I before we -- before you answer that. What was the Ukrainian response when you did that demarche with the Ukrainian counterparts to raise these concerns?

A: The Deputy Chief of Mission was mortified. And she was a young diplomat who did report that immediately back. And I believe
the President himself or certainly his staff in Ukraine offered some
apologies and tried to tone things down on the Ukrainian side. The
Ambassador, who returned, I think, a day or 2 later, called me. I was
in the midst of just sort of meeting these people, because, as I said,
it was literally my first week on the job, and he came in to underscore
that, you know, this was nasty politics in Ukraine and, you know, they
valued the Ambassador, they valued the U.S. relationship, and all that
the United States was doing to support Ukraine's progress and their
efforts to defend themselves against the Russia aggression.

THE CHAIRMAN: And this was relayed to you by the Ukrainian
Ambassador to the United States?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, he came in, he followed up the
demarche. He was not available when we called. The standard
procedure would have been to call him in. He was, I think, traveling
on the West Coast or someplace and that's why his deputy came to receive
the demarche and our stern concerns about this. And then I had a
meeting with him at some point.

THE CHAIRMAN: And what's the Ambassador's name?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He's now gone. I can probably find it.
Chalyy, Ambassador Chalyy, C-h-a-l-y-y.

THE CHAIRMAN: And was it Ambassador Chalyy who informed you that
it would have been then President Poroshenko had expressed his regret
as well.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think we heard that through our embassy in
Kyiv.
BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q  You said that Rudy Giuliani was one of the foremost individuals discussing these allegations in public. Were you aware of whether the President had commented or tweeted about these allegations for the article in the paper?

A  I do not recall specifically. I know his son Donald Trump, Jr., retweeted or tweeted something to that -- the same thing with some, in my view, incorrect statements about Ambassador Yovanovitch.

Q  Were you aware of whether this received some prominent attention on FOX News around this time?

A  Yes. I mean, if I look through emails -- my -- the Ukraine office, and George Kent sort of overseeing that, he being the senior guy on my team, also with the knowledge and the expertise on Ukraine, knows all the players, all the -- knows the language, the political dynamics.

So they were with the embassy and his office compiling all of these reports and forwarding me volumes, of which I didn't have a chance to read everything, but we were trying to keep track of the stories and how it was generating and where was this coming from, which was the question that the Counselor was asking.

And I was forwarding not all, but summaries, ones that I thought captured well the context, you know, what was happening, who it was coming from, and how it was demonstrably wrong. I was forwarding those to Under Secretary Hale and to Counselor Brechbuhl.

Q  You said over the next week or two there were internal
discussions within the Department about a potential response to defend
the Ambassador. Can you describe what conversations you had and what
recommendations you made?

A Most of the process of developing press guidance or
statements starts with our press office in conjunction with the subject
matter experts drafting potential guidance or statements, with the
embassy obviously contributing, and I think Ambassador Yovanovitch
herself who had a clear interest in getting some solid push back on
this.

And that goes through a clearance process in the Department and
I would -- often it would get through the Bureau up to my deputies and
myself, and then it would move upstairs to what we call the seventh
floor for the "P," known as the Under Secretary for Political Affairs,
David Hale, and then "C," Ulrich Brechbuhl, the Counselor, who were
kind of in the main my senior go-to people on this.
[12:03 p.m.]

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q And what -- describe the conversations that you had -- well, withdrawn.

There was an immediate statement issued by the Department specifically rejecting the allegations. Were you aware of that, that followed very closely on to the publication of the first article?

A Yeah, if you give me a chance here, I'll --

Q And by the way, feel free to review your emails as we go on today if they are helpful to you.

A Exactly. That's why I brought them. So I think I should try to use them. Let's see.

Okay. So by Wednesday, March 20th, when a lot of this stuff had come out -- and the way the press operation usually works, it's response to particular queries from journalists.

And we did get a response to the query that there were rumors at that time circulating around the dismissal of the Ambassador to Ukraine, and citing articles in The Hill publication.

And so we had a statement -- a response. Just to be technical, it's a response to the press query, versus a formal statement that is released by the Department. And they sent me a draft, which was cleared by Deputy Assistant Secretary, DAS Kent, by D staff, that's the Deputy Secretary of State; P staff, the Under Secretary of State, and by the NSC. And then they came to me looking for clearance.

This was actually in response to a Ukrainian TV query, this
question on rumors circulating about the dismissal of the Ambassador, because that was a theme that had emerged, was, oh, she's already been fired or she's gone. And, obviously, that was of particular interest in Ukraine as a story line.

And I did make a suggestion here that afternoon, just switching the order of sentences in a particular paragraph. And I can read you that statement if you want -- or, again, it's not technically a statement -- read you the response, the particular paragraph that I asked to be moved.

Q Who was on this email chain with you?
A Oh, this is lots of staff throughout the Bureau, the press office staff. And then I forwarded those up to Ulrich, I think. I was sending him emails, you know, fairly often.

The office for Ukraine on the Thursday then, the 21st, forwarded up a package of this providing sort of -- this was up to the seventh floor, to the Secretary's office, giving kind of the story, what had transpired over the last couple of days, what The Hill had published, this op-ed which really kind of started this, an op-ed by a journalist called John Solomon, relating to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Lutsenko, whom I mentioned earlier, and then providing some facts in terms of what we knew about it.

Q Was a response to the press query ultimately provided?
A Yes, I believe -- I believe it was. And then there were further -- there were further questions, queries by the media, and we continued to use -- sometimes, I think, with minor
refinements -- language that we had.

Q What was the approved language that ultimately was issued?

A I'm just trying to make sure. The cleared guidance, this

is on Thursday the 21st of March, cleared guidance from last night,

so as of the evening of the 20th, as all this had come out. I mean, it begins: "Ambassador Yovanovitch represents the President of the

United States here in Ukraine" -- this is what the embassy was

authorized to put out -- "and America stands behind her and her

statements. The allegations by the Ukrainian Prosecutor General are

not true and are intended to tarnish the reputation of Ambassador

Yovanovitch. Such allegations only serve the corrupt. Ukraine, like

the United States, is a free country with a free press. That is one

of the fantastic and unifying qualities of U.S. and Ukrainian society. Politicians, pundits, and the media are entitled to share their

opinions as part of the political process. It does not mean the claims

are true. Such attacks redouble our resolve to help Ukraine win the

struggle against corruption."

Q Now, following this statement or response to a query, did

you have additional conversations with anyone above you in the State

Department about issuing a statement to defend Ambassador Yovanovitch

more persuasively and powerfully?

A I did. We were trying for a statement. As this went on,
dealing with this kind of press thing, you know, you give your response,

and certainly in my experience it was wise to then see where the story

goes, if it continues, and it did continue on.
Q  And just to be clear, you have, in your career, you've had
a lot of experience dealing with press matters in the State Department,
having worked --
A  Yeah.
Q  -- at that office multiple times, right?
A  To be clear and fair, the press world, the world of the media,
has changed dramatically since the days when I conducted daily
briefings and dealt with the press as the focus of my job. We didn't
have Twitter. There was a news cycle.

But that's -- and just to interject here, because it gets to the
point you made earlier, I found the statement by the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs in response to the demarche, that as the chairman asked, we
demarched and said we really expected the Ukrainian Government to step
up and say something about this. And the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
did put out a statement through their ministry spokesperson, Zelenko,
saying how: The ministry fruitfully cooperates with the U.S.
Ambassador and thanks the American diplomat and her team for their
contribution to building strategic partnerships between our states.

So that was an important piece.

But this -- so getting back to my point about, you know, where
does the story go? It kept coming.

So by Friday night, March 22nd, I was sent then Saturday morning
a roundup of Friday night U.S. media developments. And our press
office information officer in Kyiv was trying to monitor everything
for us and send in bundles that sort of captured this.
And this included some of the nastiest of the tweets that included some implied violence, references to "lynching" against the Ambassador, which we turned over, or were turned over, obviously, to the security people as well. Some details, the program about -- by Laura Ingraham that referenced then the letter that then-Congressman Sessions had sent in May of 2018.

Q And just so the record is clear, you're reviewing emails that you had from that time where you're --

A Yes, sir.

Q -- summarizing what is included in them?

A Exactly, yes.

Q And so I had asked you earlier about conversations about issuing a more formal defense of Ambassador Yovanovitch from the executives or from the seventh floor and you indicated you did have those conversations.

Can you describe a little bit more generally the nature of those conversations?

A So by the weekend, as I noted, you know, with this still going, so now we are on the weekend of the 23rd, I've been in town 5 days, and my team was, as I said, passing the stuff to me, excerpts from the various press things, trying to sort of compile it. And I did forward it up to Under Secretary Hale, copying the Counselor on the 23rd in the afternoon: "Looping you in" -- this is to Ulrich Brechbuhl -- "Looping you in on the latest I've received." And the references I mentioned before that include Twitter-based threats
against the Ambassador.

And then Under Secretary Hale said he "deferred to coms people," or the communications folks, "but I believe Masha" -- that is, Ambassador Yovanovitch -- "should deny on the record saying anything disrespectful and reaffirm her loyalty as Ambassador and Foreign Service officer to POTUS and the Constitution."

And we transmitted --

Q What is the date of that email?
A That is the 23rd of March.

Q Is Ambassador Yovanovitch on that email or is that just --
A No, that was his reply to what I had forwarded up to him and to --

Q Can you just tell us who else was on that email?
A Under Secretary Hale and Counselor Brechbuhl.

Q And you?
A He was replying to me.

Q So the three of you --
A Yes.

Q Okay.
A Let's see here.

Q While you're looking through, if I could follow up on something else. You said Rudy Giuliani was one of the people prominently promoting these allegations in the media.

Prior to the publication of these articles and Mr. Giuliani's comments on them, were you aware of Mr. Giuliani's interest in issues
related to Ukraine?

A  I would say I had a vague awareness through the press. I mean, mind you, I had been back now 5 days, and I think I was aware of things he had said broadly regarding Ukraine, but it certainly wasn't something that I was tracking particularly. It didn't have a relevance.

Q  So when you assumed the job on March 17th --

A  18th.

Q  Or 18th, rather, did you have any specific knowledge from within the Department as to any involvement or interest by Mr. Giuliani?

A  No, I got a better idea of it later on with George, my Ukraine expert, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Ukraine and Eastern Europe, who later had sort of, with his team, gone through and tried to capture what he then described as four different narratives that were being pushed in all of this.

So by April the 1st, by the end of the second week, essentially, after 2 weeks of this, George had kind of identified four strands, as he called them, four narratives that were emerging.

This one that had started it, the anticorruption, that there had been undue pressure by the U.S., by Ambassador Yovanovitch on -- in the efforts against corruption.

Narrative two was a theme about 2016 collusion between Ukraine and the Clinton campaign.

The third was -- there was -- how he wrote it here was, this "Biden
(Burisma)" -- Biden as in Hunter Biden, and Burisma he put in parentheses, because I don't think I knew what Burisma was at that point, corrupt gas company.

And the fourth narrative that we sort of identified as a general theme that was in all of this was regarding the Soros organization, because one NGO, called AnTAC, that had received grants through U.S. assistance programs had also received a grant from the Open Society Institute.

Q And based on what Mr. Kent explained to you, either in email or otherwise, and any other information that you gathered about these four different strands, were you aware of any validity to any of these four strands of accusations or allegations?

A I was not.

Q Was Mr. Kent, to your knowledge?

A No. And, again, he was positioned to be able to sort of provide context because he had served at the embassy in Ukraine and was familiar with these narratives and some of these things that are happening.

And I think, just from reading more recent press reports, he described that to you in his own deposition before you.

Q Right. I just was asked -- the question just related to, at that time, did you have any indication from him or anyone else that there was any validity to these allegations?

A No, sir.

Q Okay. I think our time is up, and I will now yield --
A Well, maybe we can come back to something else regarding the question of a statement.

Q Yes. We'll pick that up next time.

MR. GOLDMAN: Great.

Mr. Castor.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Ambassador, if you have something on the tip of your tongue regarding a statement, it might be helpful to just continue on that.

A Okay. Just because I am dealing with these reams of paper. And, you know, if these are just emails about Ukraine, one of my 50 countries, you can imagine the number of binders. And this was in the first week. So, yeah, exactly.

So this, again, is March 25th, where we had tried by the end of that first week of all of this to say, you know, can we put out -- and Masha was interested in some kind of statement, not just the response to queries that we were doing, but a formal statement from the Department.

And, you know, queries continued to come in following, for instance, the -- specifically on some of the FOX News programs of Laura Ingraham and Sean Hannity, we got a lot of questions about the allegations there.

And we forwarded it around for clearance, to put it out. And I was sent from the staff on Monday the 25th, 12:04 p.m., from the Special Assistant to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs: "P" -- that would be the Under Secretary -- "says no statement."
And then that actually -- that was not sent to me. That was sent to the European Bureau press office, which then forwarded it to me, highlighting the response of P.

Q So that was no statement?

A Correct. He said there will be no statement. "P says no statement."

Q Do you have any additional information about why that decision was made?

A I don't. There would be no statement. We would continue to use the press guidance that we had, that had been cleared.

Q Okay. Did you ever come to learn why there was a reluctance to offer a statement, an additional statement?

A No, that was the decision that came down.

Q And the Ambassador was subsequently recalled early.

A Actually, I do not believe that that is a factual statement.

Q Okay.

A The Ambassador remained -- we are talking now March.

Q Right.

A We got through this period, which was about 2 weeks.

I -- and as I indicated, I think as we looked at why now, where is all of this coming from, Ukraine was in a highly political season with Presidential elections around the -- around the corner.

As I said, in that period, the first week of March 18th into the second week of March 25th through 30th, my interlocutors were the Counselor and Under Secretary Hale in terms of what could be the press
guidance, what potential statements.

By the end then of the month, the 31st of March, was the Ukraine Presidential election, the first round, and that's when Mr. Zelensky had an extremely strong showing and things, I think, kind of died down a bit maybe as there was more of a focus on Zelensky and the 3 weeks until the runoff.

We had, of course, in Washington the NATO ministerial. I know I was extraordinarily tied up and focused on that. Masha Yovanovitch remained as Ambassador and at post, albeit I know that this continued to rum below. And as you can imagine, the embassy was extremely busy focused on covering the elections, doing the analysis and diplomatic reporting that is their bread and butter.

And I returned then to Europe, my first trip after having come back to cover this. I left on the 8th of April and was in -- back in Stuttgart, where, of course, I remained still technically assigned.

I had a forum I had to speak at in Brussels, the Daimler Forum, and there were farewells that week for General Scaparrotti, the commander, who was leaving, both in Berlin, honored by the Germans.

And then it was while I was still in Germany that the story picked back up again in, I think, in anticipation of the second round of elections, which were held on our Easter holiday, April 21st.

And, in fact, from my calendar, I recall that on April 21st, I spoke with Masha Yovanovitch in Kyiv. The focus of that phone call was about her interest -- I think I mentioned earlier -- in possibly succeeding me as her next assignment, you know, given that her tour
was coming to its 3-year conclusion.

And I believe it was in that phone call where she told me that she had thought about it and it wasn't the right fit for her. She wasn't going to pursue it. And, in fact the commanders had all said, oh, they would love to have Masha there again. Her reputation was such that European Command commanders were eager to have her take over that position. But she had decided against that.

And then it was on that weekend that the media storm happened again, and I got some urgent calls from Counselor Brechbuhl. I spoke to him in a phone call on the 24th of April, as well as with the Under Secretary and the head of human resources, that things had gotten, in their words, suddenly much worse.

There was a lot of unhappiness -- without anything explicit, because we were speaking on open lines -- there was unhappiness from the White House that Ambassador Yovanovitch was still there, and the belief that she needed to come back, the belief in the State Department that she needed to come back to Washington for consultations. And the head of human resources, the Director General of the Foreign Service, Ambassador Carol Perez, made that call to her.

And I talked to Masha. I think we had a WhatsApp conversation. So we just had this conversation about, you know, was she interested in coming to EUCOM? She had said, no, she was grateful, but that was it.

Here from the WhatsApp texting, it's okay to share that with General Scaparrotti and Wolters, she told me, and let me know -- I asked
her to let me know when you feel comfortable with me speaking to Carol, the head of human resources, and with the Political Military Bureau to let them know we need to continue to focus on a successor at EUCOM.

And Masha said: Fine, fine to do that.

Then on the 24th after these calls with Ulrich, and then Masha had been told she needed to come into the embassy to take an important call from the Director General and she was asking me if she knew what was going on. And I did tell her in a call with Ulrich he said things had suddenly, quote, "changed for the worse," unquote, but he couldn't share anything on an open line.

Then I had a call from Carol -- that would be Ambassador Perez -- who also offered no details, but was about to call you, Masha, next.

And I said to Masha in text message: "So I'm largely in the dark, but it doesn't sound good. Let me know if you want to talk."

And she was at that time hosting a large reception and she was going into the embassy to talk to Carol. And I believe Carol told her that she really should come back to Washington. Carol didn't have a picture of this, but just that she needed to -- she felt Masha should come back to Washington.

So that's when she came back to Washington. That would not be considered recalled. She was told to come back to Washington, which I believe she did on Friday, the 26th of April.

I, myself, returned to Washington, arriving Sunday evening, the 28th of April. And then we had a series of meetings on the 29th, where
the discussion was about what to do.

You know, at this point, I should add, the expectation -- I believe Masha had set a date of, I think it was around July 5th or July 8th, and in terms of the planning that I was doing with Counselor Brechbuhl in a separate track, but, obviously, related because it had to do with the chief of mission job in Ukraine, we had a couple of plans.

That was what I was tasked with doing, was how do we cover our mission. We were trying to identify a new person to be proposed for nomination as Ambassador, and then we were trying to figure out how we cover, after Masha would depart.

The date of early July was out there because July is, typically, in the Foreign Service, a transition day for these things. You have your Independence Day reception as a sort of farewell, and then you leave. I think she was looking at July 5th or 6th, possibly 8th, something in that range.

And, well, why don't I let you, if you have more questions.

Q So you said that the term "recall" wasn't accurate. What would be the word to describe her departure from the embassy?

A So, when she met on the 29th with the Deputy Secretary of State, I was asked to sit in with that, and I joined that meeting. I read the press reports of her deposition to you where the Deputy Secretary is quoted as telling her: "You've done nothing wrong." And that is what I heard sitting there as well.

The problem at hand was that, essentially, the President had lost, what we term, had lost confidence in her as Ambassador in Ukraine. And
the question then was, what comes next? And the Deputy Secretary of State, to my recollection, gave her the option to decide what date she wanted to return, understanding -- and I think we all understood -- that with the media storm and the focus on this, that going back to Kyiv and staying through July could be, you know, difficult.

Masha was staying on in Washington for a preplanned event. In fact, she had already asked for, before she came back at the behest of the Director General so quickly on the 26th, she had asked for permission to come back to Washington, be away from post, to receive an award, to be honored at the National Defense University and inducted into their hall of fame, an event we were looking forward to, and, again, something which speaks to the esteem within which she is regarded both professionally and personally.

She determined at this meeting she would stay through the -- that event, which was on the 9th of May. I was able to get back from travel with the Secretary to actually be there for that event. And then I think she went back to Kyiv on the 10th of May, and then decided to depart fully. She packed out and left on the 20th of May, which, coincidentally, was the day of the inauguration of President Zelensky.

Q And so you said the term "being recalled" wasn't the right word. Is there a better word?

A There is a term of that, her -- again, my greatest concern was for Masha as a person and a professional. None of us -- well, I certainly, and I know many of other colleagues, were not pleased about
this. No one wants to see someone go through this and such, you know, inaccurate and unpleasant things being said about a colleague, a professional, about a United States Ambassador in the press, particularly in her own country.

And -- but I wanted to make sure Masha was going to be okay. Obviously, I had two responsibilities. One was to the post, making sure our post was properly and legally covered, and one was to Masha as a human being, as a colleague, as a United States Ambassador.

So when she made the decision to make her last day the 20th of May, I fully supported that. And so I think the best term would be to say that she ended her assignment on the 20th of May, which was 6 weeks earlier than the date we had been focusing on.

Q What was your role in helping select Ambassador Taylor to serve as the Charge?

A So that was something I was assigned, worked closely with Ulrich Brechbuhl, the Counselor. Also the Under Secretary wanted to always be involved.

Once we realized that the nomination process was not -- there was no possibility that that was going to produce an Ambassador in time to take over for Ambassador Yovanovitch, we realized we needed some coverage.

And I want to note why. Ambassador Yovanovitch had a deputy, a chief of mission, who had moved into that spot from another position when George Kent had left the year before to come be Deputy Assistant Secretary under Wess Mitchell. That deputy was assigned to move in
the spring to become the Deputy Chief of Mission at our embassy in Stockholm, Sweden.

At first I said: Well, she's been really good. She knows the place. She should stay. You know, we don't need -- it turned out we had no Ambassador in Stockholm. He was in the process, but not through the confirmation process, and there was no other senior Foreign Service officer at post. So we felt we had to let the DCM leave Kyiv to go to Stockholm.

Another senior Foreign Service officer in Kyiv -- did I just misspeak? -- she needed to leave Kyiv to go to Stockholm. Another officer in Kyiv stepped up, Senior Officer Joseph Pennington, to be the Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, and the new Deputy Chief of Mission was coming from Embassy Paris, and she, a great officer, had no Ukraine experience, no language.

And my feeling, supported by my higher-ups, was that it was absolutely unfair to throw her into this situation which was in focus. So we were trying to find someone who could act as Charge d'Affaires. We have a roster of people known as WAE, while actually employed, who are usually retired senior Foreign Service officers, retired ambassadors. There were a number there. And we, as part of this process, sort of who could be, we got out the list of former ambassadors to Ukraine.

And the one guy on there who was potentially available who was not involved in business or aligned with, you know, one political side or another in Ukraine was Ambassador Bill Taylor, who was at that time
executive vice president at the U.S. Institute of Peace.

And so we approached him: Would you be interested and available, potentially, to do this job? And he said yes. And so we pursued that.

And it was a complicated administrative, bureaucratic thing to do it, but ultimately -- ultimately, he agreed and he was approved.

They looked at different ways he could be sent, under what -- what official title. Finally, they worked that out. And he did agree to go and got there in June, early June.

Q Did you have any discussions with Under Secretary Hale or Counselor Brechbuhl about the tricky external environmental factors in play that led to the Yovanovitch situation?

A What do you mean by tricky?

Q Well, the Rudy Giuliani, the President's unhappiness, the statements made by the Prosecutor General. It was -- I think it has been described to us, variously, as a bit of a snake pit.

A I don't recall that term specifically, but it's not a bad description, I suppose.

Yeah. No, I mean that was -- clearly, part of the challenge was, you know, a difficult time in Ukraine to be putting someone in, all of these allegations about the U.S. Embassy or Ambassador, which were making difficult our very important tasks there, things that were, you know, I think, critical to the U.S. interest, national security interest, foreign policy priorities, remembering that, you know, Ukraine is a country that is partially occupied by Russia and in a hot war.
And so that, combined by the political scenario in the States, the press, the allegations there, made it a very difficult and delicate position, which is why we were viewing, you know, who would be -- who would have the background and capabilities, who would be willing to send themselves into this, as you describe it, snake pit. And I think we were very fortunate that Ambassador Taylor was willing to take that on.

Q Did the Department make any commitments to Ambassador Taylor that they would have his back or help him with these external environmental factors?

A He wanted to be very clear -- or he was very clear that he wanted to be sure that Ukraine policy was going to continue as it was, that our support for Ukraine and its Western orientation and its desire to reform and our support for them against the Russian malign and military actions was going to continue.

And he was worried. He did express concerns. You know, some of the WhatsApps I had with him reflect that -- about that. Because he felt if the policy was not going to remain, then he wasn't the guy. But as he was waiting for the bureaucracy, the bureaucratic processes to catch up to see if this would be possible, he was also waiting for this.

And he really wanted to see the Secretary. He was in touch with Ulrich Brechbühl. I met him for the first time on the 2nd of May, just to make sure that's correct. Too many notes.

Yeah, the 2nd May, after I'd come back and all of this had happened
with Masha, I met Bill Taylor late that week, traveled again on the 5th of May, I departed with the Secretary. Got back in time for Masha's ceremony on the 9th of May. But Bill had made clear he really wanted to meet with the Secretary here, since, as Ambassador -- as Charge d'Affaires, obviously, he is reporting through -- to the Secretary.

And we did have that meeting on the 28th of May, and he left that meeting, I believe "confident" would be the right word, and comfortable, and ready to do that. And then, ultimately, got out to -- shortly thereafter, I think, the 1st of June, so he couldn't be gone that weekend. But early June he arrived at post and he has been a terrific leader.

Q Was there any understanding among yourself, Under Secretary Hale, Counselor Brechbuhl, the Secretary, that the situation needed to be monitored closely?

A Yeah, we -- I mean, I think, obviously, Ukraine is important. You know, it is one of the 50 accounts that I have. But I think, I mean, I guess -- what do you mean by monitored? The situation in Ukraine?

Q The situation, yeah.

A I mean, as we monitor a situation anywhere --

Q The situation that led to the end of Ambassador Yovanovitch's tenure there?

A We needed to make sure -- you know, one of my concerns has always been for the mission and its personnel who were, I think it is fair to say, shaken by all of this, the Ambassador's abrupt early
departure. And Bill was -- and from the beginning, from the time he landed, he was well-known still to the embassy, to the local staff, to Ukrainians, and that helped. And so he certainly brought stability to that.

And, of course, we were launching into a whole new era with the new President, Zelensky having won the election, having been inaugurated on the 20th of May. And at that point, I think you're all aware, certainly it's been in the open media based on testimony here, that for the inauguration the White House had delegated Secretary Perry, the Secretary of Energy, to lead the delegation that included Kurt Volker, Ambassador Volker the Special Representative for Ukraine, and Ambassador Gordon Sondland, the Ambassador to the EU.

And there was another person, I think Mr. Vindman, from the National Security Council, who went, and I believe Senator Johnson was also there, in a slightly different capacity as a legislative representative.

And they were really then pegged as the leads on Ukraine, obviously, with George Kent remaining as the Deputy Assistant Secretary with the great, kind of, institutional knowledge about the country, about the post, in his capacity covering Eastern Europe and the Caucasus.

And it was after that inauguration when that team came back and they met with the President, I believe, on the 23rd of May, and Ambassador Volker provided me a readout of that which kind of laid out the path forward in terms of implementing our strategy and policy with
Ukraine.

Q  What was your experience with Ambassador Volker?

A  I had known Kurt Volker almost my entire career. Again, we were -- we became ambassadors about the same time, he, to NATO, when I went to what is now North Macedonia, and we have been friends and colleagues.

  And he had been useful in, as I came back to Washington, dealing with, you know, 50 countries and 12,000 staff, I talked to him a couple of times about Ukraine and where he saw the direction, you know, how he was implementing the strategy, the role he was playing both in terms of the negotiations part, to try to help bring an end to the war, as well as ideas in terms of things like antitrust, moving forward on continuing our push against corruption.

  He is a pro. I mean, I was very confident that, you know, he's got it, he's got the lead on this. He was doing a lot of, I think, very useful messaging and communication. He was getting under the skin of the Russians, which was great. They were complaining regularly about his statements.

  And he was, of course, trying to meet with a Russian counterpart, and they, the Russians, had not agreed to a meeting since January of 2018.

  So I had, you know, from my perspective overseeing and shepherding all of these pieces, the mission was falling into a good place with Bill at the helm, the new DCM getting up to speed very quickly. So on the ground, the embassy and U.S. Mission Ukraine was well taken care
of, and the engagement and policy management was being handled by, I think they have been referred to as the Three Amigos. But Ambassadors Sondland and Volker -- and Ambassador Sondland, whom I knew, of course, had been very clear, I know he had the direct access to the President. And I know that the Secretary had great faith in Ambassador Volker and also direct contact with Ambassador Sondland. So that's where things were being handled.

Q What was your understanding of what Ambassador Volker was doing with regard to the new incoming administration? Was he trying to build relationships?

A Yeah, he -- I mean, let me turn to a particular page which is very helpful on this. Give me a second here.

Q And just while you're looking for it, he's a person of high integrity and great experience with regard to Ukraine, correct?

A Absolutely, yeah.

Q And everything that he did during the course of these events were in the best interest of the United States to the best of your knowledge?

A Yeah, I guess I'd have -- I don't -- I don't know everything he did.

Q To the best of your knowledge.

A So to the best of my knowledge, I know Kurt to be, you know, an outstanding American, a fine diplomat. I would say my view -- he really wanted to see Ukraine succeed and to see our policy and strategy succeed.
And, you know, I had been brought in, my mandate was continuity. You know, Wess Mitchell had helped put in place a set of policies in line with the national security strategy, a set of individual strategies for the eastern Med and the Black Sea, for the Arctic, for the Balkans, and for Ukraine. And, of course, Kurt had been brought on as a Special Representative as part of that. And he had a vision.

With all of this churn over Masha, I think he felt badly. He knew Masha, of course, from, you know, his long -- his career at the State Department and since then. And he was, you know, very dedicated to this. And after the briefing with the President that they had, I was -- pull this out -- I was, I believe, traveling at that time.

Once again, as I've mentioned, my mandate is to spend about 50 percent of the time on the road trying to engage with our 50 countries, our missions, the leadership, bilateral and multilateral, the conferences, representing the -- sometimes traveling with the Secretary, sometimes representing the Secretary at ministerial meetings and other such things.

So, in fact, on that period I was back -- we were having a chief of missions conference, my first opportunity to bring all of the chiefs of mission from within the European Bureau together, cosponsored by EUCOM in Stuttgart. But I had waiting for me an email, unclassified, that Kurt had forwarded in terms of the readout of the Ukraine delegation White House meeting, and it laid out the sort of key takeaways and what we were going to proceed with, focusing on the President signing a congratulatory letter to Zelensky, inviting
Zelensky to the Oval Office. Our goal had been to have that happen before the July parliamentary elections to show support.

The delegation, that is what Ambassador Sondland referred to as the Three Amigos, will work with the Ukrainian Government and contacts to push for reform and flag the President's concern about corruption, poor investment climate, oligarchic control over the economy, and ensure that Zelensky comes prepared to demonstrate commitment to reform and improving U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relations.

And at this point, they had -- this was relevant to my other task, of course, which was the finding a long-term Ambassador. The decision had been taken that there would be a political, a noncareer Ambassador would be identified ASAP.

Secretary Perry, as part of the delegation, would focus his good offices to help Ukraine find solutions to their energy and gas needs, which was a real issue. I mean, already in May we were anticipating if the Russians turn off the gas, they need to be stockpiling now so that they could get through a winter, and media messaging discipline, which Kurt took the lead on.

So he had really laid out what they were doing, the way forward. They had the support and confidence of the President and the Secretary. And that's how we headed forward.

Q  When did the Rudy Giuliani involvement become known to you?
A  In terms of -- in terms of what? I mean --
Q  Mr. Giuliani was -- developed a nontraditional role here, and I wonder when that first became -- you first became aware of it,
A, and, B, did you ever see that nontraditional role as problematic.

A He was certainly named and in the press himself as being engaged in Ukraine. Going back to those earliest days when I first arrived in March, I think he was frequently on television and promoting some of these -- these allegations and narratives about our Ambassador and the Embassy.

So I think that was probably when I first was aware that he was involved. I know our press line, our response from the Department when I got there, so what do we say about Giuliani, was that, you know, he is not a government employee, we refer you to Mr. Giuliani's office for comment on him.

Q Did you ever come to learn that Volker was having communications with Giuliani?

A Kurt mentioned at some point that he was going to, I think, telephone, or maybe meet with Giuliani. I think his goal very much was to -- you had this harsh critic of Ukraine, and his goal was to help explain our strategy, our process, and the fact that Zelensky represented a whole new chapter in Ukraine and new opportunities to implement U.S. strategy and policy in Ukraine.

I wasn't a part of that conversation. I had never met Mr. Giuliani or spoken to him.

Q Did you ever learn from Ambassador Taylor that he had concerns about Giuliani's role?

A I do recall -- I think in a little of our WhatsApping -- is that a verb? -- WhatsApp -- because when -- before Bill finally went
out, you know, we had identified him, as I've already described. We were going through just, you know, from a bureaucratic standpoint, Herculean efforts with the personnel people and the lawyers in figuring out how -- how we could send Bill out as the Charge d'Affaires. That ultimately all worked.

But he was -- he had expressed some concerns about that stuff. I will just take a minute here to try to find if I can find a specific reference. Just that, you know, this was such a distraction.

So in an exchange with Bill Taylor on the 26th of March -- I'm sorry, May, 5-26-19, this is before we have met with Secretary Pompeo and which then reassured Bill. He said to me: "I'm still struggling with the decision whether to go. Basically, whether the politics back here will let me or anyone succeed." Referring to this very political era around Ukraine.

Generally, I mean, when you said Ukraine in the public or the media, this is what people focused on. When you said Ukraine to me, it was like, we have got an embassy, we have got this country with enormous potential that is being, you know, at war. There's just all kinds of implications.

That was what, I think, Bill was worried about, and he said, again I quote: "The Giuliani Biden issue will likely persist for the next year. I'm not sure S," the Secretary, "can give me reassurance on this issue."

And then I was at my cousin's wedding. I said: Oh, I'll try to offer more response later. And at one point then Bill said: While
you think about this, let me make another suggestion. You could send
Kurt. He would be perfect. Knows the issues better than anyone.

And I just said: Well, Kurt has said no before. He didn't want
to be Charge or Ambassador. And noted that he had met with the
President, along with the rest of the delegation, and come away fairly
optimistic. What I just described to you is about that.

And Bill said: We should definitely talk to him.

And I said: Kurt will be joining us for the meeting with the
Secretary on Tuesday.

And Bill said: Perfect.

And then there was another little snag where there was some
confusion that Bill got the impression that Kurt really did want to
take the job. We clarified that.

Kurt said, no, he did not want to be Ambassador, he wanted to stay
as Special Representative. And Bill made very clear at that time that
the Secretary needed to hear Kurt's description of the debrief with
the President on return from the inauguration.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: Based on that he said, I can't go, he was hesitant about going. Then we had the meeting with the Secretary, and Bill came away confident then that he would do it and at the same time, right about the same time on the 30th of May, I reported to Bill -- I was on the way to Berlin this time -- that the Legal Advisor's Office had found a way for you to go out as the Charge d'Affaires with Christina as your Deputy Chief of Mission. And Bill said -- I checked back in with him while I was on that trip, and I just said, Checking in, is everything in order for your adventure, I called it. Bill Taylor said, All on track, thank you.

And in fact I was on the way to Brussels that night, the 4th of June, and I noted to Bill, I expected to meet President Zelensky at a dinner that Ambassador Sondland was hosting, and so that was the first time I met President Zelensky.

BY MR. CASTOR:
Q You were at that -- I believe the dinner was around June 4th?
A June 4th, correct.
Q Let me just, as we try to sketch out our day of questions here, it might be helpful to just take stock of certain areas that you may or may not have firsthand information about.
A Uh-huh. Sure.
Q Firsthand information can take two forms. It can take the form that you may have been copied on an email which you may have read, or you may not have because you extraordinarily have a vast portfolio;
and then there is firsthand information that you had actual conversations and so forth. And so let me just sort of run through some things if I may.

Did you have any firsthand information about the delay in funds and the PCC process? It started on July 18th, and ended around September 11th.

A Correct. I became -- to answer your question, yes, I had firsthand information on that. My staff notified me. We have a, in fact, he is a Congressionally mandated position, our assistance coordinator who reports directly to me as well almost like an eighth DAS in the Bureau, and he reported that there were holds on a lot of assistance. This was in July. And every day, there was sort of an update, and there was this hold on the military assistance for Ukraine, and there was sort of a puzzlement as to, you know, where is that coming from? Is that general?

There were holds on all kinds of stuff. I know they were really eager to get moving on some projects in Armenia, et cetera, so I was aware of that. And the decision was how do we handle this?

It wasn't clear where that was coming from as we pushed this into the PCC process, which is the best way to come to a decision, and if somebody is blocking this, they need to sort of show their hand.

Q So maybe we can go through that at some point today.

How about communications with National Security Council officials? Like did you have any phone calls or in-person interactions with some of the National Security Council officials on these issues?
I can give you names or --

A Why don't you try to, and I will tell you.

Q Starting with Ambassador Bolton?

A No. I had no direct contact with Ambassador Bolton.

Q And his deputy, Mr. Kupperman?

A I have met Kupperman, but not in capacity -- not in connection with Ukraine, I don't believe.

Q Then Dr. Fiona Hill?

A Fiona, I dealt with from the time arrived, I have known her going back years. Again, I didn't have a lot direct discussion on Ukraine because that was handled by George and the Ukraine team, and, of course, the delegation as we would call it, Sondland and Volker.

Q So maybe, we will go back and try to unpack the communications you had with Dr. Hill.

How about Tim Morrison?

A Yeah, and he succeeded her. Again, I don't know that we have talked a lot specifically about Ukraine. I tended to have George from the State point take the lead on all of that, and I believe Tim was in contact with the team, the delegation, Kurt, Sondland, and perhaps Secretary Perry too.

Q And then there was a Lieutenant Colonel Vindman who had the Ukraine portfolio in the National Security Council?

A I don't believe -- I know him, I know we have met, but I didn't have conversations with him.
A  Not to my recollection no.

Q    

A  It really doesn't and that could, I mean it is possible, I did attend a PCC meeting, not the one on the assistance process, it was another PCC that was about other issues in Ukraine. And some was those people may have been there, there was a huge interagency group, and that was on the 31st of July.

Q  Okay.

A  I couldn't tell you who all the people were there.

Q  Going back to the PCC process, it is our understanding there was, began on July 18th, and there were meetings the 23rd, the 26th, and then, possibly, the 31st as well?

A  That was, it was a PCC about Ukraine, but it was not focused on the assistance. The question of assistance came up because I specifically remembered, since she was sitting next to me, Laura Cooper from OSD did raise -- she said, I need to raise this because we were still wondering, you know, when is this, you are watching, first of all, it is vitally important to the Ukrainians; this is a key component of our policy, and second of all, you are watching the fiscal year calendar ticking away as you head toward August, which tends to be a somewhat of a down month.

   So it came up, one piece on that, but there was still no resolution, and I know we were hoping that there would be a, there had been the, on the 26th I believe, and you may have had referenced that, this, the deputy small group, which Under Secretary Hale had attended.
I wouldn't go to that anyway, but I was traveling. And I understand he had gone, and there was still no resolution of this, and there was anticipated to be a principals small group. But getting Secretary Pompeo and the Secretary of Defense together just wasn't happening until -- and then the lift was, the hold was, seemed to be gone.

The understanding was that, without definitive knowledge, but my understanding, or our operating understanding was that this was being held by Mr. Mulvaney, the White House Acting Chief of Staff.

Q So of those PCC-related meetings, you participated in one, is that --

A Yes. I was at the one on the 31st of July.

Q And did you ever have any communications with Acting Chief of Staff Mulvaney?

A No. I have never met him, to my knowledge.

Q Okay. Any communications with the President?

A No. I have never met the President.

Q And then Ambassador Sondland, what is your experience with him?

A So I got to know Gordon Sondland when I was still at EUCOM, because one of my jobs there, of course, was to engage our missions, our posts, our ambassadors throughout the AOR, area of responsibility, and that included the EU. We were really trying to pursue a lot of things, and have our EU mission be more robust in terms of engagement on things like military mobility, the European defense initiative, and the European defense fund, and some other aspects, and he was very
welcoming of that. He was eager to do that. So I met him at gatherings. I paid a call on him when I went to Brussels, and knew him a bit, and then, I think, I mentioned the trip I took to Odessa in February of this year. I already knew, I had already been vectored to come back to take this job, but I was still technically at EUCOM and we were going to do the ship visit. And Gordon joined me because we were trying to show U.S./EU solidarity for Ukraine. This was the ship visit largely done in response to the Kerch Strait incident when the Russians took some small Ukrainian craft in the Kerch Strait going into the Azov Sea illegally, I might add, and took hostages essentially, 25 Ukrainian sailors.

So a U.S. ship was visiting, and Gordon had arranged to bring senior EU officials along. I met him in Brussels, and then we flew together to Odessa.

Q Did you ever have any discussions with Ambassador Sondland about the aid or the White House visit?

A The White House visit, yes. I mean he was clearly part, this was, his, he had the political lead as he told the Ukrainians as we talked about regularly, he had conversations with the President, with Ambassador Bolton, with Mr. Mulvaney, as far as he told me. Again, I talked to you about the readout I got from the meeting after the inauguration on the May 23rd meetings, so we talked about that way forward, what he was working on, and the, you know, getting a White House visit for Zelensky and he was determined to get that done.

Q The Ambassador Sondland has, he gave a TV interview, or he
described that he has a rather large remit from the President?

A Yes. I have heard that phrase.

Q Was it your understanding that was, in fact, the case?

A Yes.

Q Okay.

A That was my understanding that he had the remit. I'm not exactly sure what that means, but certainly had the remit, the access, was very much in the lead.

Q And that he also had the support of the Secretary to get involved with some issues that may not traditionally be part of the EU portfolio?

A Yes, to undertake activities that would not, I think, when I asked Under Secretary Hale about this, he said it is irregular, irregular is the word.

Q Did you have any concerns about that?

A Well, it was irregular, but I knew Gordon, and I understood that he was given this task, and that is what you work with when the Secretary and the President have a team of Volker, Sondland, Perry, that was where the focus was.

Q I like to make sure our Members don't have questions as we approach the end of the hour. It is a very wise staff thing to do.

MR. MEADOWS: Go ahead.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q We are just coming up on the end of the hour.

A How quickly time flies.
Q While you're having fun.

Did you ever have any discussions with Under Secretary Hale about anything more than what you just offered about the irregular --

A Over time, you know, I would comment occasionally that, well, Gordon is doing X or Y, which would not necessarily be, as I said, the regular remit of the Ambassador to the EU, but starting in June, I know I reported on having been, Gordon had invited me and it worked out because I was with the Secretary at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in The Hague, and so, I went down to Brussels, I think that is, I'm giving you the sequence right. Anyway, I was there for the June 4th dinner he had for his national day celebrations, and then this dinner with President Zelensky, as well the prime ministers of Jordan, Rumania, and the President of Poland.

Q Did Ambassador Taylor or DAS Kent ever communicate with you about Sondland's role and whether it is irregular or not? Or the issues they had?

A Yes, it was a regular topic of, well, Gordon handles this. It was irregular. It was, then it became normal, because that's what the mandated arrangement was. He and Ambassador Volker were in regular contact I think, coordinating.

Q At any point, did Ambassador Taylor develop a real issue with this?

A You know, I was looking back at, say, the WhatsApp, And once Bill was out at post, I didn't have a lot of contact with him. A few times he mailed and said, When are you going to visit? And I was just
never able to get into the calendar. We were waiting to get through the elections, the government elections and other things. But he really was dealing directly with, as far as I knew, Kurt and Sondland, they would refer to that and, of course, George Kent was my point person on that. He was kind of keeping track and having, I think, quite regular interaction with Bill Taylor.

Q  Ambassador Taylor, some of the text messages that have been posted at various news accounts, and his opening statement, which has also been made part of the media accounts --

A  Uh-huh.

Q  -- he clearly talks about his frustrations. Did you see any of those news stories?

A  I've seen the news stories since his testimony.

Q  Were you aware, contemporaneously, that he was having issues to the point where he had even raised the prospect of resigning?

A  I don't believe I was, I knew there was sometimes frustrations, but I was not -- again, I wasn't doing this sort of day-to-day interaction with him or with the posts, so it was kind of him working with --

Q  So if he was seeking support from Washington --

A  He did not go through me. He was -- I also knew, which was another point of, okay, that's being handled, he was, I think, in fairly regular contact every week or two with Counselor Brechbuhl.

Q  Did George Kent ever flag this for you as an issue that needed to be solved or worked through?
He would just sort of bring up the latest, depending on what was happening in Ukraine, I mean, things like the White House meeting, that became almost any news on the White House meeting, you know, I was looking at, in terms of the Ukraine account and my focus on it, you know, we had the leadership in place at the mission, we had a policy and a way forward, a team that was with the full support of the President and the Secretary of State working on this, and there were a few things to do. And one was the Zelensky White House meeting was very much in the fore, and, you know, "Is it scheduled? Is there any news?" would come up and still no news.

And that sort of proceeded throughout the summer until, of course, there was the expectation when the President was going to Poland on the 1st of September, that there would be a bilateral meeting in Poland. Of course, the President canceled because of the hurricane.

Q But for these issues, you were largely in the background?
A Yeah. My task, all of these 50 countries and the travel and the engagement, is to make sure things are being handled. So I have seven, potentially eight deputies, and 50 missions, and making sure people are plugged in so the seventh floor Hale and Brechbuhl are aware of what is going on.

MR. CASTOR: I think my time is up, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take a 5- or 10-minute break and then we will resume.

[Recess.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, I have a few questions I want to go
through before I hand it back to our counsel.

You used a phrase in connection with the -- is "curtailment" the better word than "recall" of Ambassador Yovanovitch's tenure in Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Mr. Chairman, I don't want to -- I'm not trying to be pedantic here.

THE CHAIRMAN: She was told by Secretary Perez to get on the next plane.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, but that was to come back to Washington for consultation.

THE CHAIRMAN: And during those consultations, she was told: You've done nothing wrong --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: -- but the White House has lost confidence in you?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: An Ambassador that's told the President's lost confidence in them is pretty much being told your service is no longer required at your post. Is that fair?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is a fair characterization that technically she was given a choice of exactly what date, I mean, there were 6 weeks left until she was already scheduled to depart and finish her tour.

THE CHAIRMAN: But that is only part of the story right, Ambassador, because wasn't she asked if she would be willing to, in fact, extend her tour before all this happened?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do understand that Under Secretary Hale had discussed whether she was willing and able to do that when the change in the process of identifying her successor was derailed because of the reassignment of that person, of myself. And as I noted, we do do that in some cases, the existing Ambassador does stay on.

THE CHAIRMAN: But here we're talking about going from a situation in which she is asked whether she can stay for a much longer period of time to being told to get on the next plane, come back to Washington and is informed that the President has lost confidence in her and then she ends up leaving that post prior to even her desired date in July.

Is that a fair summary?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, the term the President has lost confidence is somewhat of a term of art. That can mean a lot of things, is not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I wouldn't, I don't know that I could speculate. It is a term that we use. You see it in government, I guess, or in other situations. Certainly for an Ambassador, yes, that is, or it happens also within the embassy, we have had I know many cases where the Ambassador has lost confidence in somebody in his or her team and that person is sent home, finds a new position, curtails the assignment.

THE CHAIRMAN: But in this case, where the Ambassador is told you've done nothing wrong, these allegations against you are essentially meritless. On what basis can you say the President lost
confident in the Ambassador when the Ambassador has done everything
she was supposed to do?

It seems like it is not quite the right description for what
happened here.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not use that term. The term was what
the Deputy Secretary used in speaking with Masha.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, do you know if that is really not the best
description of what happened here?

What was the reason the President no longer wanted her to be U.S.
Ambassador to Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: And there was an effort to get a statement at the
top level of the State Department from the seventh floor expressing
support for Ambassador Yovanovitch; the answer was no.

Did you find out why the answer was no?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: What I got was the Under Secretary had said
no to putting out a statement, and that we would stick with the cleared
agreed response that we had used that I described earlier.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, no, I understand that the decision was made
that no, she would not be given that statement of support from the top
of the State Department.

My question is why?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don’t know.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you were never given an explanation even though
you were in the chain of command responsible for Ukraine among 49 other
countries?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that the -- that that was
germaine, particularly to the decision of how to handle this particular
case in response to the press and these allegations. I had urged --

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm asking you, though, given your
responibility, you were never given an explanation for why the seventh
floor refused to issue a statement of support for their own embattled
Ambassador, and Ambassador to which they believed had done nothing
wrong?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The guidance that we were given, the response
to the press was where I was told they felt comfortable going.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you referenced an email or a text message
in which the Ambassador were told that she should express public support
for the President, did I understand that correctly?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I can, give me a moment, Mr. Chairman, I'll
find for you that particular email.

Yes, what I quoted, I believe earlier, was an email from Under
Secretary Hale. I had forwarded on the 23rd of March, as I mentioned,
I tried to send updates because that is what I was asked to do about
all of this negative, this -- these narratives. And so that morning,
or that, it was afternoon according to this, although I said, good
morning, I'm not sure why it shows 5 o'clock p.m.

But I say, good morning, looping you in on the latest I received
this morning -- and this was regarding what diGenova/Inghraham are
stating and claiming and this was also where there was reference to
Twitter-based threats against Masha, which had me extremely concerned, and that we had passed that information to diplomatic security in the RSO. And the response from Under Secretary Hale was, defer to our coms, communications people, but I believe Masha should deny on the record saying anything disrespectful and reaffirm her loyalty as an Ambassador and FSO to POTUS and Constitution.

THE CHAIRMAN: So Ulrich Brechbuhl, I'm sorry this was Under Secretary Hale --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Under Secretary Hale.

THE CHAIRMAN: Under Secretary Hale is recommending to a U.S. Ambassador that she make a public expression of support for the U.S. President and our Constitution?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have read to you, sir, the quote from the email and --

THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware of any conversation that Ambassador Sondland may have had with others about telling the Ambassador to go big and issue a statement of support for the President?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Sondland? No. I'm not aware of that at this time.

I'm not aware of that in general.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you ever seen a circumstance where a U.S. Ambassador was asked to give a personal expression of support for the President of the United States or the Constitution?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, we all swear an oath to the Constitution to protect and defend --
THE CHAIRMAN: That is not my question. Everybody takes an oath when they are sworn in.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right.

THE CHAIRMAN: But my question is have you ever seen a circumstance where a U.S. Ambassador, under false attack, is asked to defend themselves by making a public expression of support for the President or the Constitution?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I cannot think of another instance of that. No, sir. I can't say it hasn't happened, but --

THE CHAIRMAN: You mentioned that Ambassador Sondland had direct access to the President and regular communications with Chief of Staff Mulvaney, is that right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He told me such, and I was aware of his, you know, ability. He would be in Washington and go to meetings at the White House, and then with the President. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I think you said that, essentially, he, although it was not part of his EU charter, he was given a commission of sorts, a remit of sorts, along with Ambassador Volker and Secretary Perry, to be the lead on Ukraine in this pivotal period?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you ever have a chance to read Ambassador Taylor's written testimony?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, sir, I did. I definitely read the whole thing once.

THE CHAIRMAN: He makes a number of very disturbing -- oversights
a number of disturbing facts involving an effort to coerce Ukraine to
do two political investigations that would be helpful to the
President's reelection campaign by withholding a desperately sought
White House meeting between the two Presidents and military aid.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: I take it you would think that if those facts are
correct, that coercing an ally to engage in political investigations
to help a President's reelection campaign is a terribly wrong thing
to do.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Can you just repeat? I want to make sure I
ger the exact context of the question.

MR. PERRY: I question the premise of the question, reelection
campaign. It is never stated and it is all hypothetical, Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm making reference to Ambassador Taylor's
testimony.

But let me ask you this way, Ambassador: Would you agree that
pressuring an ally to conduct political investigations that would be
useful to a President's reelection campaign by withholding a White
House meeting or withholding military aid would be wrong?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: May I have I second?

I was going to answer, I recall this from my day, it really is
a hypothetical question.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is actually not hypothetical at all. But can
you agree, as a decades-long State Department official, that it would
be wrong to withhold military aid from an ally fighting the Russians
AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, it would depend on the exact context of that and what decisions may go with something like that, so I don't feel comfortable giving a definitive answer to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Really. So you think under certain circumstances, it is okay to withhold --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is not at all what I said, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You're asking me to give a definitive answer to a hypothetical question.

THE CHAIRMAN: I wish it were hypothetical but nonetheless Ambassador Reeker, I think it is a fairly simple question. The Ukrainians were deeply interested in having a meeting between the two Presidents, were they not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It was our strategy, our goal. We were very interested in having a meeting take place.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so were the Ukrainians, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: It was very important to Ukraine, was it not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: To my understanding, it was, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And it was important to Ukraine, because a meeting with the United States President in the Oval Office shows that the new President of Ukraine has a relationship with the President of the United States, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.
THE CHAIRMAN: And that is an important signal to send to adversaries like the Russians, who are were occupying Ukrainian land, right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That was one of the reasons it was part of our strategy was to demonstrate support for President Zelensky and the new chapter of Ukraine moving forward in accordance with the strategy that Kurt Volker had outlined had emerged from the meeting that those three, the delegation, had had with the President on the 23rd of May.

THE CHAIRMAN: And because that was in the best interests of the United States, our national security that that meeting happened, you would agree, would you not, to withhold that meeting for help of the Presidential campaign would be wrong.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: If that was the case. I don't know that that was the case.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, but if that was the case, you would agree that would be wrong.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is the prerogative of the President to determine what meetings he schedules or doesn't.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it the prerogative of the President to coerce an ally to help with a Presidential campaign.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, under the -- I don't think, I don't want to -- excuse me.

MR. GOLDMAN: Let the record reflect that the witness is consulting with his attorney.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The witness has consulted his attorney
because the witness is not a lawyer.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm just asking about right and wrong. And wouldn't you agree that it would be wrong for the President of the United States to withhold either a summit meeting with a foreign leader, or withhold military assistance as leverage to get help with his Presidential campaign. Wouldn't you agree that that is wrong.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: If that were indeed the case in a hypothetical situation, that -- particularly when that was running counter to what was our described strategy for implementing policy, what we had determined was the way forward, I would find that disappointing.


AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, sir, you are asking me to comment on something that I don't know to be the fact.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I'm not asking you about a hypothetical here. You've read the call record of the July 25th call between the President of the United States and President Zelensky, haven't you.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I read what was released, I was not on that call.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you read Ambassador Taylor's testimony.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, his released statement that he released.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the most you can say about a President who would use his office to coerce an ally to undertake political investigations to his advantage is that it would be disappointing?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm trying to refer to the released portion.

MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, with all due respect, what he is reviewing is not the full testimony of Ambassador Taylor. I want to make that clear. We sat in here for 7 hours. And so, unless he has the deposition. I haven't been able to see it. I don't know what he is referring to other than a leaked partial testimony of Ambassador Taylor.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not directing him to review anything. Would you read the question back for me?

MR. MEADOWS: So, Counselor, is he reviewing the deposition there?

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not asking for what he is reviewing, I'm just waiting for the reporter to read back the question.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: If you want to know, I'm reviewing the opening statement that was released publicly by Ambassador Taylor.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, two points: One, it wasn't necessarily released by Ambassador Taylor. I don't know that we --

THE CHAIRMAN: No, I don't mean to imply that it was released by Ambassador Taylor. I don't believe it was released by Ambassador Taylor.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think I pulled it off the internet.

THE CHAIRMAN: And do you factually dispute anything you saw in the copy of Ambassador Taylor's written testimony.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd have to go over it in far greater detail. Much of it was stuff I was not aware of, he described his impressions...
and other things I --

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, Ambassador Taylor does describe, I think, in a text message and in his written testimony, are we really going to hold up military aid for purposes of a political campaign or words to that effect? You are aware of that.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: And that Ambassador Taylor threatened to resign over that.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was not aware that he had, I read that he considered that, I was not aware that this was happening at the time.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this conduct that the Ambassador thought serious enough to potentially resign over, am I to understand that you think that conduct would be okay or only disappointing.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, sir, I never said that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay, then tell me, do you think that conduct that Ambassador Taylor described would be wrong.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He would be justified fully in taking that decision to resign if that was the way he felt, that is a decision for him. Again, the conduct is, I don't know what the conduct was. You are describing for me what he questioned and wondered if that was what was taking place, and it may have been. I was not aware of that at the time. Subsequently, we have seen lots of reporting to that effect. So I'm not comfortable as a career foreign service officer, you know, to comment on something that I'm not familiar with, specifically, what the details or circumstances of any particular situation might be.
As a general rule, I want to see our policies followed and implemented, and certainly promoting the White House meeting, supporting President Zelensky, providing the military assistance that had been appropriated and approved by the Congress of the United States was critical to our efforts to help Ukraine, and we had a tremendous opportunity, we still have, to support a whole new direction there. And that's -- as I got updates, and as I mentioned already, was asking regularly is there any news on the White House meeting, we were monitoring for that. We were monitoring formation of the government.

THE CHAIRMAN: I hate to cut you off, but you're a long distance from my question. I can you are very reluctant to express an opinion on this subject.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Because my opinions are not what I understood this to be for.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, you were in charge of the policy of Ukraine among other countries.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was not, sir, in charge of the policy in Ukraine.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you had the responsibility in the chain of command for what was going on vis-à-vis Ukraine as one of your, as part of your portfolio, did you not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Ukraine policy implementation was being handled, as I have described by Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker in conjunction with --

THE CHAIRMAN: It was part of your area of responsibility, was
it not.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Ukraine is one of the countries in the 
Europe and Eurasia bureau.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm asking your opinion about what was happening 
to subvert U.S. policy vis-à-vis the Ukraine is important. But I 
understand your reluctance to express an opinion about the conduct of 
the President. But it is important, given your responsibility in this 
area, to know what you believe is right and what you believe is wrong.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know what the conduct of the 
President was. I have not met or spoken to the President or been part 
of the discussion involved in the phone calls or the specific meetings. 
What I was monitoring and tracking was, you know, accomplishing the 
things that had been set out, according to Ambassador Volker, embraced 
by the Secretary and the President to my understanding, in terms of 
moving forward.

To say that I was dismayed, frustrated that the White House 
meeting had not yet taken place is a fair, is a good statement. There 
was definitely concern, as I have already mentioned, that the 
assistance, particularly the military assistance, was held up. We 
didn't know exactly where or why, so we were pursuing this PCC process 
to try to force a decision and a movement forward on that, and that 
that was, indeed, through that period in July going into August was 
of concern to I think all of us working on Ukraine trying to figure 
out why, where the original idea had been to have a White House meeting 
before the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. That came and passed.
It was very successful.

THE CHAIRMAN: Again, I hate to cut you off, Ambassador, but you are far afield from my question. So let's turn to the documents that you have indicated in your binder several yellow tagged pages. Could you go to the first yellow tagged page you have in your binder.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us what that document is.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is an email, from let's see, David Hale, the Under Secretary, responding to my forwarding to my forwarding to him, we had had an earlier engagement in terms of the broad question in March, for a couple weeks.

THE CHAIRMAN: What's the date of the email.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: 26th of March.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you read us what that email contains.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Yovanovitch had told us -- sent an email noting to us that Ukrainian television had conducted public opinion polling regarding the level of trust to Lutsenko, he had been the Prosecutor who had raised all of these accusations, some of which he later recanted, about Ambassador Yovanovitch versus statements issued by the U.S. side, the statements, the embassy and the Department had put out in response to questions. And 83.4 percent of respondents trust Ambassador Yovanovitch, 5.5 percent trust Lutsenko, and 11.1 percent do not care. And Masha had sent that to us noting the subject line, a bright spot in my day, which, indeed, underscored the fact that the Ukrainian people were, you know, understood the sort of
nasty politics afoot in Ukraine.

THE CHAIRMAN: And what is the gist of the email that is in response to that.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I forwarded further to Under Secretary Hale, you know, we had been discussing over this period why, and why now, was this happening in March.

Why did all this barrage of stuff begin?

And George Kent, the deputy who manages Ukraine, provided some insights from some Ukrainian journalists that he had meet in an event in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and they were commenting on the dynamic known as the Giuliani-Lutsenko dynamic and --

THE CHAIRMAN: And what was that? Would you read that paragraph?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sure. So I'm quoting here, from, now just to be very clear this is --

MR. MEADOWS: So is this an exhibit we have, Mr. Chairman? I guess what I'm saying is, is this a fishing expedition? Are we just going to ask him to read 400 pages of 3 inch --

THE CHAIRMAN: We may have to, Mr. Meadows, because these are documents that have not been provided the committee.

MR. MEADOWS: But they are government documents, Mr. Chairman, and from what I understand they were brought in to help him refresh his memory, not as an investigative tool.

THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Meadows, I'm asking the witness to read from the documents and --

MR. MEADOWS: Well, I guess --
MS. DAUM: Mr. Chairman, I'm perfectly happy to let him read this one document. May I note that those yellow flags were placed by counsel as part of our discussions prior to this meeting. Asking him to review individual yellow flagged document and read them in the record, as Mr. Meadows has stated, was not the intention of bringing these documents. They are to help assist the committee in providing in helping Mr. Reeker understand the events in which he was participating. They are to help him refresh his recollection. We were more than happy to cooperate and provide assistance but, again, asking him to refer to each individual document is going to be -- is not the intention of this.

If you don't want him to refer to his binder, and if you don't want him to be able to provide you the detailed information --

THE CHAIRMAN: Counsel, you disclosed the substance of the yellow-tagged pages, I did not. That was your choice to disclose that attorney-client communication.

But the witness is referring to documents to refresh his memory. We are entitled to know what those documents are that refresh his memory.

MS. DAUM: You are.

THE CHAIRMAN: And no proper objection is laid.

So the witness will answer the question.

MS. DAUM: I'm not sure what the question was.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the question was, what does the email say pertaining to the Giuliani discussion?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: So to provide the appropriate context, this is an excerpt of something that was forwarded to me by George Kent, our Deputy Assistant Secretary for Ukraine, who, as he described it, provided color commentary from Cambridge, where he was that long weekend in March, met with Ukrainian journalists, and they both -- he talked about two journalists who offered -- shared their views, quote, "offline" separately.

And I will quote what he wrote. He said they had talked to players extensively in Kyiv the past 5 days and knew that the Kyiv dynamic was Giuliani-Lutsenko. Both thought that Giuliani had probably initiated the relationship. Parenthetical note, (I remain unsure, and I think it was Lutsenko) close parenthesis. But even if Lutsenko had reached out, they felt that Giuliani shaped the dynamics of the, quote, "reveal." Of most note, Giuliani allegedly told Lutsenko that he was acting fully on the President's behalf and the President wanted Masha gone.

This alleged message feeds the determination of Lutsenko to proceed with the attacks, feeling they can validate their usefulness by delivering.

I don't feel comfortable using the names of two journalists. Is it all right just to refer to two people who told him this?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is fine.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: These two people also felt that regardless of how much Poroshenko knew or authorized the operation, the team was, quote, "all in" and would not stop, in reference to the attacks on Masha.
Each was appalled at what Lutsenko had done and did not see any winner in this gambit except Moscow.

THE CHAIRMAN: If we could go to next yellow tabbed document.

You can tell us, is that an email and who it is to and from.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is just a list of, let me figure out, this is forwarding George Kent's updates on the Wednesday, the 27th to Counsel Brechbuhl and Under Secretary Hale, for the Wednesday updates on The Hill article, and it is just a lot of press pieces.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that the one you referenced earlier that had the four subject matters.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The four narratives, I think, was the word I think I used, or George had another term for it for --

THE CHAIRMAN: So, I'm sorry, what date is that document.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This one is the 27th of March, so it is in the second week as all that story was coming out. Yeah. I had come on the, started on the 18th, and this is the following week. And so it is -- this is not that specific one, I think it was from these, and I would have to find, again, the one where George sort of had, he and his team had looked at all of this with the embassy, because one of the questions posed to me by the Counselor, and the Under Secretary was exactly sort of what is prompting this and why now? I think the why now was very tied to the Ukrainian political season, and the presidential election. And so, he was forwarding these up. And I didn't send every single item because there were lots of them. I couldn't possibly read all of them, but I sent ones that seemed to
capture sort of where the story was.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go to the next yellow tab then.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: And that is just simply me saying I inquired as to --

THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us is it an email to and from and the date.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is an email from me responding to an email from David Hale.

THE CHAIRMAN: On what date.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The 28th, the next day.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can see that is a short email. What does it provide.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is just the Under Secretary saying I have tried to get guidance from the Counselor, and suggesting to me if --

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to just read it for us. It would be simpler than paraphrasing.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have tried several times to get guidance from Ulrich, to no avail. I suggest Phil call to see if we can okay, one, her -- Masha's -- use of social media in self-defense and, B, release of a Department statement.

And as we talked earlier, ultimately, the answer from David Hale was no statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go on to the next yellow tab.

MR. MALINOWSKI. Excuse me, seeking guidance, what was the
seeking guidance all about?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I couldn't tell you that definitively. All I have is just this email, just, "I tried several times to get guidance from Ulrich." I think at that time we were still in this issue of, how do we push back on this, and what can Masha do? And so his reference to using social media in self-defense to make that case, we discussed earlier, he had suggested she might want to put out some kind of statement, and then the question of releasing a Department statement.

But I can't -- I think that is in the context of what he was seeking guidance on but I can't say that definitively, since it is from the Under Secretary. And here is the one that describes the, sort of, the comprehensive. So this is by now 2 weeks, so this is the April 1st.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are referring to another email now. Can you tell us who that is to and from and the date.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is from George to myself and others within the Bureau where he has put together this, what I described earlier, this four main narratives that were coming out of this barrage, the four narratives that he could see that all of this, these stories belonged to essentially one of these four major narratives.

THE CHAIRMAN: My colleagues may want to go through it more in detail, but let's go on to the next yellow tab.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think it is the last yellow tab.

Mr. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, again, what questions are we asking other than trying to get him to read emails so that you can ask different questions? I don't -- it really will have a chilling effect on every
single witness if what you are going to tell them to do is don't bring
in documents to refresh your memory, because I may get you to read them
all. I can't imagine that in a --

THE CHAIRMAN: Representative Meadows, do you know what has a
chilling effect? The White House sending letters to witnesses like
this saying don't show up. So if you want to --

MR. MEADOWS: I don't know of a single witness that has not shown
up.

THE CHAIRMAN: -- encourage the witnesses --

MR. MEADOWS: Has a single witness not shown up at this point?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: They could be litigated --

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: Which one.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, we can fill you in when we are not taking
up the time of the witness.

MR. MEADOWS: I'm not aware of one.

THE CHAIRMAN: We just heard from one yesterday who is not going
to show up.

MR. MEADOWS: I'm saying to date every single witness has shown
up --

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not even remotely accurate, Mr. Meadows.
But let's discuss this outside the presence of the witness. The
witness has testified, Mr. Meadows, that he used these documents to
refresh his recollection. We have every right to find out what he has
used to refresh his recollection.

MR. MEADOWS: But recollection on what question, Mr. Chairman?

THE CHAIRMAN: On his testimony today. So, Mr. Meadows, I'm sorry, but there is no legitimate objection to lodge here, nor has there been one lodged. I can appreciate that members may not want the contents of these documents to become known to the committee, but there is no other reason to prevent this witness --

MR. MEADOWS: I don't object. I don't object to anything that actually furthers the transparency. What I do object to is you have got a counselor and a witness who have obviously gone through and tried to highlight things so that in the event that you or the minority ask a question where they can quickly refer to it, to suggest that they should go through and --

MS. DAUM: I do object to the characterization of the reason why those yellow flags are there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, you have given the characterization of why the yellow flags are there, and I accept your representation --

MS. DAUM: The reason why has not been --

THE CHAIRMAN: But, in any event, there is no proper objection lodged here. The witness will go back to the document we were referring to, and please describe the date --

MR. MEADOWS: So, Mr. Chairman, let me ask one other thing, then. You are not trying to induce the witness here to breach attorney-client privilege by asking them to read that out, is that correct.

Because that is what it appears --

UNCLASSIFIED
THE CHAIRMAN: My colleague, it is the lawyer's prerogative to disclose to the committee, her attorney-client privileges. She has done so in part. That was her decision, not mine. So if we can return to the document.

MR. MEADOWS: I don't recall it. Maybe she could read that. Could we have the clerk read that back, because I'm not aware of that.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Meadows, I'm not going to allow any further delay.

MS. DAUM: Might I just say you are assuming that the reason why those flags were there is covered by the privilege.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not assuming anything, Counselor. I'm just asking the witness to answer the question. There will be no further interruptions, please.

MS. DAUM: It is an assumption.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm not assuming anything except what you told us, so Ambassador Reeker, you may tell us what that document is, the to and from and the date on it, please.
[2:32 p.m.]
AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is an email that I pulled out. I remember specifically pulling this out because that pertains to the question you asked and I answered earlier about the role of Ambassador Sondland.

There was stuff not at all connected to Ukraine, but I also asked the Under Secretary, reminding you that I've been on the ground in this job for 2 weeks, to understand better why Gordon is involved and the Under Secretary responded --

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, can you tell us the date?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: April 2nd.
THE CHAIRMAN: April 2nd. And it's from you to --
AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, it's a string so it --
THE CHAIRMAN: A string between you and whom?
MR REEKER: And David Hale, the Under Secretary. My -- the head of policy.
THE CHAIRMAN: And if you could read us the string from the -- in chronological order, in terms of the time.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: It has nothing do with this case, the other things, until separately I asked to understand better why Gordon is so involved.
THE CHAIRMAN: Can you tell us what you asked about that and what the reply was?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just told you. I asked him: Separately, I'd like to understand why Gordon is so involved.
THE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's another thing. And he responded:
Yes, Sondland angle is irregular. And I believe I already testified
to that as the characterization of the role when I had asked, coming
new into this, why the Ambassador to the European Union was that
involved. And that was the answer from the Under Secretary.

THE CHAIRMAN: And was that the sum to total on that document of
the discussion of Ambassador Sondland or Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. The rest was separate stuff about
George Kent and had do with Georgia, different thing.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. If we could move on to the next yellow
tagged page.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. This was -- again, this had to do with
keeping -- the date here is April 22nd. So I was at this time in -- back
in Germany. Yeah. Yeah, I was in Stuttgart. The problem with email,
it doesn't tell you where you are.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yeah, you don't need to look up your location. If
you could just --

MR REEKER: Well, I want to be complete if I'm going to read you
all my emails.

THE CHAIRMAN: I didn't ask you the location.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I was in Stuttgart. So there had been a
question about making sure Under Secretary Hale was getting all of
the -- you know, he wanted to make sure he was getting information.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this is an email from you or is this another
AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is a chain that begins: I'm not even a part of it. I had called back to the office to say, you know, Under Secretary Hale wants to be more tightly lashed up in the Ukraine decision information cycle. So this is back to the team that's handling Ukraine, George Kent and his team there, which, as I put it, have been whirring -- whirring, w-h-i-r-r-i-n-g -- at warp speed the last several weeks.

That's from George to the Under Secretary's staff. And this was sort of making sure how we were -- we broadly, how the Ukraine team was feeding information to the Under Secretary. And the response from the Chief of Staff was: That sounds right. The current flow is fine. If you flag things for the staffer and me when needed, we will be in good shape. Phil can reach out directly to P -- the Under Secretary -- or me -- the Chief of Staff -- whenever needed to ensure he is looped in, especially with regard to anything for the Secretary, because the Under Secretary handles that.

And then George has forwarded to me saying: Per the below and our evening telcon -- telephone conversation -- I engaged the Chief of Staff on how much he wanted and we've been shoveling information to the staffers, the staffers' way.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the date on that document again?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: April 22nd.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. And is that the gist of the communication?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is, yes, very much. And it includes a
string of information, condensed versions of the press stories, a
number of bylines, some tweets, various things that he just was
demonstrating.

I was -- and I can remember being in -- that's why it was relevant
where was I -- I was back in Stuttgart. And I wanted to make sure that
the team, which had been feeding me stuff, was feeding it to the Under
Secretary, who was really the -- you know, is the head of policy -- and
filter stuff to the Secretary as appropriate.

MR. LYNCH: Could we know if Ambassador Sondland is on that chain?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He is not. This was really the
internal -- you know, the stuff was still coming, we're now about a
month from this initial deluge, and how process-wise, we're just making
sure everybody was in the loop, which, of course, is what leads to these
complex email chains.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go to the next document.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: And this is George forwarding to me on the
26th.

THE CHAIRMAN: The 26th of --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: April, I'm sorry, 26th of April this year.

Just let me get reference of where I was, what I was doing.

Yeah, so this was -- I was still in Stuttgart. I had described
for the record as part of the deposition earlier it was the 24th of
April where things took a turn. I can't remember the quote that I read
you, but I had lot of calls about the situation, unhappiness --

THE CHAIRMAN: Tell us.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- about the situation. And so George was then forwarding to me on Friday the 26th new stuff. This is forwarding from Embassy Kyiv's press collection. So they had forwarded it throughout the embassy.

Subject: President Trump discusses Ukraine on the Hannity program and a new Ukraine-related column in The Hill, the publication. And George just pointed out for me -- again, I'm over in Germany trying to make sure we're generally there -- it says: No mention of the Ambassador, i.e., Ambassador Yovanovitch, focus instead on the alleged Clinton 2016 collusion and the Boden -- I think that's supposed to be Biden, but it's a typo -- Burisma strands of the story line. As I described the four strands that George had identified, what I identified as strands two and three, with the attack on the Ambassador and the anticorruption programs as strand one, and the attack on the anticorruption NGO as a Soros organization as strand four. So that's why I flagged this. It was reiterating --

THE CHAIRMAN: And who's in that chain of communication?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: George Kent sent it to myself, the Acting Principal Deputy, [REDACTED] was head of the press office.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, who's the Acting?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: His name is Michael Murphy. While I was gone he was the Acting -- another one of the seven DAS's, and he was Acting while I was away. And the head of our press office, [REDACTED], who has since moved on to a new assignment.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go on I think to maybe the last.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think you've expired the yellow tabs. And this is from the director, so he would be essentially the deputy to George Kent.

THE CHAIRMAN: What's the date?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Friday, March -- May, excuse me, May the 10th. So context here. Ah, yes. I was -- I had gotten back. You'll recall I mentioned May the 9th I had returned with the Secretary. We traveled to Rovaniemi, Finland, for the Arctic Council meeting, to Berlin -- Berlin had been postponed. We'd had to go to Baghdad unexpectedly because of the Iranian issues there. And then we'd gone to London and I'd arrive at Andrews the morning of the 9th, gone to the --

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, we don't really need your whole travel schedule, just interested in the document. Can you tell us --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, it helps give me context, sir, into why they were sending me things and why I pulled them out. So this was forwarding on a Newsweek story, "How Rudy Giuliani's unfounded claims of an anti-Trump conspiracy in Ukraine may have ousted an Ambassador."

THE CHAIRMAN: And --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: And it just noted this Newsweek piece highlights the Giuliani-Lutsenko connection that is at the root of all this, as you'll recall, one of the sort of strands that George had described. There is also he refers to a New York Times article today that says, "Giuliani plans to go to Kyiv to meet with Zelensky and urge him to continue investigating the alleged Ukrainian collusion with the
Clinton campaign and the case again Hunter Biden." So it's just informational on what was in the press.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did you get a reply when you sent that out from anyone?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not send that out. This is an incoming email to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Oh, it is. Okay.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sorry if I did not make clear. This is an email from the office director, who is essentially the deputy to the head of Ukraine, the DAS, George Kent.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you receive a copy of the cable that Ambassador Taylor sent to the Secretary?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not receive it because it was sent "NODIS," but I have seen it since.

THE CHAIRMAN: And what's the nature of that cable? And when you say you've seen it since, when does that mean you've seen it?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This past week.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that something you reviewed to prepare for your testimony?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I think that's a fair -- fair to say. I went back to find it. I had not seen it in the original that I recall. I think the date of it was -- let's see here -- August 29th. And this was -- again, it's a classified cable, so I won't speak to it under anything that is classified.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you know about the cable at the time?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: On August 29th, I don't believe I did, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: So was the first time you actually learned about
the cable either when you read about Ambassador Taylor's testimony or
when you went to review it last week?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I believe it was the first time and that's
why I went to review it. If I had seen it or been aware of it, I did
not recall that. And it was when I read reference to it that I looked
it up to find it, because --

THE CHAIRMAN: And how did you obtain it if you only saw it last
week?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I asked my staff to get it from the watch.
You know there's lots of emails, lots of cables online.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were there other documents you also sought to
review in preparation for your testimony today?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Really just as much of the email as I could
go through.

THE CHAIRMAN: So apart from the cable and the binder, were there
other -- in the binder of documents you have with you today -- were
there other documents you sought to review that you do not have with
you today?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Calendars mostly, which I have brought to try
to sort of put together the timeline into -- which is, I was hoping,
would be helpful to you to understand my engagement and involvement.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask one more question and I'm going to hand
back -- or are we out of time? We're out of time. Okay. Then I will
yield to the minority.

MR. MEADOWS: If you need to eat.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm fine with that. No, really, truly, Scout's honor. I've been trying to figure out how to diet. No, absolutely, sir. Thank you for the consideration.

MR. MEADOWS: The deposition diet.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is not an appetite-inducing experience.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q  Always if you need to consult with your lawyer, step out, you know, please feel free to let us know. Because these depositions aren't super comfortable. So to the extent we can make them more comfortable, we try to do it.

A  I finished my coffee, so by 45 minutes I'll probably need to step out.

Q  Okay.

When you took your post as the Acting Assistant Secretary, what was your understanding of the U.S. policy towards Ukraine was at a high level?

A  We were dedicated to supporting Ukraine, a democratic Ukraine, Western-oriented, supporting its reforms, which we had, supporting it against the Russian not only malign influence, but military attack, which was ongoing. That included of course a very robust sanctions policy. And our diplomacy more broadly across Europe included working with other countries to continue the broad support
for those sanctions, European Union sanctions, from the public
diplomacy standpoint, explaining that, trying to help others see,
against the face of a lot of Russian disinformation, what was really
going on in Ukraine.

And of course then the transition, you know, supporting free, fair
elections, which were remarkably free and fair, and fairly resounding
in terms of electing Zelensky. So that was all the broad thing. And
as I've stated before, my marching orders, as it were, were continuity
of supporting all of the policy aspects in regard to the whole portfolio
in all 50 countries and NATO and EU engagement and other things.

Q And that was on track and proceeding according to the U.S.'s
plan when you took your post?

A Yeah. I mean, when I arrived, the big focus was on the
elections. As I mentioned briefly, I'd had the short trip down to
Odessa in my EUCOM capacity, accompanied by Ambassador Sondland. Of
course Ambassador Yovanovitch was there, Ambassador Volker was there,
and these EU officials in a show of support by having this ship visit
in the Odessa port.

So I think that was on track. We knew that these elections were
crucial and we wanted to get through them and be able to move forward
depending on the outcome.

And then, of course, what I did understand once I got on the ground
was the role that Ambassador Volker played, I hadn't had as much of
a grasp of that, but that he had a very leading role, and that Ambassador
Sondland would play a big role.
And, of course, that all became clearer and more defined after they had sort of been named as the delegation to the Zelensky inauguration and then met to brief the President afterwards and took the lead, with the full support of the Secretary and the President, in implementing the sort of way ahead that I described earlier.

Q And part of implementing the U.S. policy with Ukraine was financial assistance and military assistance with the use of lethal defensive weapons?

A That is correct, yes.

Q And that was a slight change in policy from the previous administration?

A I wasn't tracking particularly closely at that time the previous administration's Ukraine policy, but I do know that the lethal -- the provision of -- now I'm going to -- maybe I do need to eat -- went blank on the Javelins. The defense systems was a new aspect under this.

And I do know, I keep this note card all the time actually with me, that State and USAID assistance for Ukraine, which is earmarked by the Congress and so those allocations are different than our regular IEECA funding, or the assistance for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, was for fiscal year 2019 approaching $450 million, $445.7 million.

Q And the provision of lethal defensive weapons was a substantial upgrade in the overall policy?

A Yeah. Again, I don't -- I wouldn't want to get into characterizing too much because I just don't -- I wasn't familiar with
what was. I inherited -- this is what I inherited and where we were
and that's really what I was focused on.

Q Do you know what the thinking was behind providing lethal
defensive weapons to Ukraine?
A I think those were debates and discussions that were had
certainly before my time.
Q Okay. Was it to prevent further Russian incursion?
A It was certainly to help Ukraine defend itself from exactly
that.
Q And has that aid done what it was intended to do?
A I'm not sure. I think the simple, broad answer is yes, that
it's helped. The Russians are still there, there is still a war going
on. There are various political and diplomatic processes at work,
Ambassador Volker was very much a part of one, which have not moved
anywhere, and I think that's largely because of Moscow's role.
Q When Ambassador Taylor went out to Ukraine, arriving in June,
was the U.S. policy on track to meet its objectives?
A I mean, again, we had outlined, as I outlined for you, several
goals more immediate, an immediate strategy. That included support
for Zelensky, who was then new, and that included having the White House
meeting, which was not on track. The hope had been to have that before
the parliamentary elections in Ukraine. That did not occur.
Q Taylor had raised the prospect of resigning. Did you -- did
I hear you say you that you only learned about that secondhand in the
course of his statement or the news accounts?
A Correct. You know, I think I described some reluctance he had had about taking the position, and he wanted to meet with the Secretary and to be reassured that Ukraine policy was not changing. And I believe he found that reassurance, because after the May 28th meeting with the Secretary he was ready to go, and then subsequently then arrived and took charge at Embassy Kyiv.

Q And since his arrival, U.S. policy has not changed, has it?
A No, sir.
Q And it remains on track?
A Again, there were some, going back to what I described as the goals that Kurt Volker briefed me on following the meeting May 23rd, there were some -- some -- I can refer back to it. It does not have a yellow tag.

So, again, these were takeaways on the way forward, indeed the President has signed a congratulatory letter to Zelensky. He did invite --

THE CHAIRMAN: Could the witness let us know what the witness is referring to, what document?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This is what I referred to earlier, sir. This is the readout I got from Ambassador Volker after the Thursday, May 23rd, meeting of the Ukrainians, what we called the delegation that had been appointed by the President to attend the inauguration of Zelensky, that is Volker, Sondland, Secretary Perry. And they had gone to the White House, met with the President. And I think I described earlier that this was sort of the way ahead.
And we have, in fact, as I said, the goal had been to invite Zelensky and have an Oval Office meeting before the July parliamentary elections. That didn't happen. The idea had been to -- that there would now be seeking a noncareer ambassadorial candidate.

That process is still underway. So that is not quite there yet is my understanding. I think that's been handled by Counselor Brechbuhl and others.

And I do understand that on the energy side, with help from experts and others, Ukraine has fully stocked up to meet its winter gas needs in order to get through the winter should the Russians try to turn off the gas flow.

And, of course, I think it's worth saying that our goal is engaging this new government and Zelensky on the reforms, continuing the press for countering corruption and moving forward, much of that accomplished through our various aid programs.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Ambassador Taylor, how long is his posting expected to last?

A I'm hesitating because I do not recall if there was a finite date to it. One answer, which would be correct, would be upon the appointment of an Ambassador, since he is not Ambassador, he's Charge.

I would have to go back to check. There may be a sort of 1-year parameter, possibly extendable, but I would have to double-check the administrative detail and I don't recall.

Q Do you know if there's any efforts ongoing at present to pick a permanent Ambassador?
Yes. I'm sorry if I wasn't clear. That is an ongoing process. And I believe, having talked to the Counselor, Brechbuhl, who I think has sort have been spearheading that, they are narrowing down on names. I know he and I had one meeting where he floated a number of names that had emerged in their discussion, some of whom I was -- some of the names I was familiar with.

Okay. So if a name emerges in the next several months, we shouldn't be surprised?

Correct. I think that's fair to say, yes.

You mentioned this morning a meeting that you had after March 21st, you had a meeting with the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Ukrainians?

On March 21st, correct.

21st, right. And then when Ambassador Chaly returned to Washington, you met with him?

On March 26th, correct.

Were you aware that during the campaign he had been outspoken against candidate Trump?

No, sir, I was not aware of that.

Okay. He wrote an op-ed during the 2016 election period, in August, critical of candidate Trump, and that's something you're not familiar with?

No, sir.

Okay. Is that unusual for a sitting U.S. Ambassador --

He's not the U.S. Ambassador.
Q I'm sorry. A sitting Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. I apologize.

A I really couldn't say. I don't --

Q Can you think of a time when the sitting Ambassador to the U.S. has taken on a candidate in the U.S. election for President?

A Oh, I can think of instances certainly in Europe, I was covering during the 2016 election, where certain political figures, prime ministers from different countries, endorsed essentially -- endorsed one candidate or another in our elections. But for ambassadors, one doesn't come to mind, I certainly can't say.

Q Did you ever have an awareness of some of the President's skepticisms about Ukraine and their corruption environment?

A Yes, I had heard that quite regularly, that the President was not a fan of Ukraine.

Q And what had you heard and who had you heard it from, to the best of your recollection?

A I had heard -- as this started, when I came and it was arriving March 18th and was sort of hit with this deluge of the negative press about Ambassador Yovanovitch, essentially the four narratives that George Kent described, which pretty much capture most of what was out there, within that discussion.

And I think it was clear from some of his own statements or tweets, certainly his attorney's commentary, that he was not -- I think the general view that had been given to me from Ambassador Volker and Ambassador Sondland that I sensed from certainly the media coverage,
that the President was not a big fan of Ukraine. And from the meeting
that the delegation had, they said, you know, he's not a big fan of
Ukraine.
Q Did Ambassador Volker ever communicate with you about his
conscerns that Mr. Giuliani may have been amplifying a negative
narrative to the President?
A Yes.
Q And Ambassador Volker's engagement subsequently with Mr.
Giuliani was in part to try to assuage those concerns?
A I think that is certainly what I took away from that, that
he was going to -- because I do recall him telling me, I can't say
specifically when, that, well, he was going to reach out to or was going
to speak to Giuliani. And I think Ambassador Volker felt that there
was this very good story to tell about President Zelensky and a new
chapter in Ukraine. And that was his goal, was to hopefully take away
some of that, what we sensed was a very negative stream coming from
Mr. Giuliani to the President.
Q What was your outlook on President Zelensky as he was elected
on his campaign of anticorruption?
A As I read more about him, it seemed impressive. The support
that he gained in the electorate was interesting and I think a strong
statement that he didn't win by a hair or a nose or whatever cliche
you want to use. He had a fairly strong and resounding mandate from
the first round and then underscored at the second round.
Then there was a lot of question, well, we'll see what happens
in the parliamentary elections because they may not reflect the same
support. But in fact they did.

I met him, albeit very briefly, it was his first trip outside of
Ukraine since his inauguration. You're familiar with the dinner that
Ambassador Sondland hosted in Brussels, and I was there. So I met him
very briefly and his wife. And he seemed -- struck me as smart and
pragmatic, young, a different, very different kind of leader, a new
generation, I think, is a fair characterization of leader in Ukraine.

Q And he's genuinely interested in the Ukrainian people and
not himself, was that your impression?

A I do believe so, yes. He made very clear at that dinner in
what he was saying to us, saying to all of those gathered, including
other leaders who I mentioned earlier, that his priority as he had
campaigned was to try to bring an end to the war in the east, which,
as you know, has taken more than 13,000 Ukrainian lives and continues
to disrupt lives and economic potential there. And I think he's
genuine about that.

Q So he wasn't running for President to get rich and to steal
money from the government and to do all those corrupt things that maybe
some other leaders have been accused of?

A That was not my impression, but I can't -- I've met him twice,
so I don't -- that was not my impression.

Q But the information that you've heard from the field, and
from DAS Kent and Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador
Volker, you're encouraged by President Zelensky?
A Yes. And that was the broad consensus that the experts were briefing me, is this is -- we've got this new President with a full mandate and we're going to our best to work with him and support our goal, you know, Ukraine, and offer U.S. friendship. Obviously we had done this with previous governments, too, more or less -- more and less success, and that, of course, remains by definition work in progress.

Q So to the extent Ambassador Volker had to engage more with Mr. Giuliani than a lot of traditional State Department officials would have liked, ultimately are you comfortable Ambassador Volker was trying to do the right thing?

A Yeah. I don't know that I can characterize what people would have liked or not in regards to that. It certainly was -- I had never had any contact with Mr. Giuliani. I do believe that what Kurt was doing, I mean broadly, was a very good-faith effort to move us forward on this policy. And I think he was reaching out there to try to, as I described already, tell the good story that there is to tell with the hope that that would get Mr. Giuliani to a different place in terms of what he was saying about Ukraine.

Q And Ambassador Volker had developed strong relationships with some of the key people close to Zelensky. Is that something you're aware of?

A Broadly. I mean, Kurt could rattle off names of key officials that he engaged with and I couldn't probably. I just, you know, 50 countries and I --

Q Sure.
A -- you know.

Q When he resigned at the end of September, was that a loss to the Department?

A Yes, I believe it was.

Q Was there any effort to try to convince him to stay?

A I have had no contact with him other than to wish him well on his wedding day, which I was unable to attend due to travel. And I can't speak for anybody else.

Q We were almost able to wish him well on his wedding day as he was here.

A We were -- my wife and I were invited to his wedding. Unfortunately, I was on official travel again, so I couldn't go.

Q I think when we spoke in the first round you identified some communications you had with Ambassador Sondland. Were there any other communications that you had with Ambassador Sondland during the time period of July 18th and September 11th when the aid was in the process of being held up, that you can remember?

A Yeah. I'm sure I did because that's a pretty big period of time and Gordon was in or out. Tell me the dates that you are referencing again?

Q July 18th is when the aid was initially subject to the hold.

A The hold, yeah.

Q And it was released in September 11th through 12th. News came on September 11th and the State Department --

A Yeah. Because the parliamentary elections in Ukraine were
the 21st, and, of course, the President and Zelensky had a phone call on the 25th, as you all know now. And I do recall knowing that there was a phone call. I was not on that phone call or part of it.

Q Did you get a readout of that phone call from anybody?
A I know Kurt sent me a WhatsApp message and just said: Great POTUS-Ze -- we referred to him as Ze, Z-e -- POTUS-Ze call.

Q Anyone else?
A So, again, back to your specific question about Gordon Sondland, you know, I saw him here and there at things he would be in Washington once in a while or we would be in occasional touch, because there were also lots of other issues with the European Union. The presidency was changing, of course, in the summer to Finland, from Romania to Finland. We did some things there.

Yeah, Gordon's pretty energetic and active. So I can't specify when and exactly where I may have bumped into him, but we were in touch occasionally.

Q During that time period, what did you see as the likely outcome? Did you think the aid was ultimately going to be permanently held up and not delivered or did you think there was a way out?
A I was focused to the extent that it would come up to me, I mean, every day we'd kind of -- there were two sides. There was one, there was the assistance coordinator saying everything is held and today's instruction is you may release 2 percent or there were various aspects. On the Ukraine specifically, it was, "Any news?" And we were pursuing the PCC process, as I said, to hopefully push forward a
decision on that.

And I don't -- I do have here a note that I had a call with Ambassador Sondland on the 30th of July, but I don't remember anything specific about that. I think it may have also had to do with -- that was around the time I had gone on the -- I went on the 31st to the PCC about other aspects of Ukraine.

Q If the aid was not going to be delivered there would have to be some sort of official process, whether that's rescission or reprogramming. Do you know if either of those efforts ever got underway?

A I do not. I just remember the conversation with Laura Cooper who was focused and brought it up at the PCC I attended on the 31st, even though the focus of that PCC was not the assistance. But she said on the assistance, we need -- we at DOD have to intend to keep moving forward on this. Because, you know, they had a separate legislative mandate to do that.

So we continued to be hopeful, I know, in terms of the PCC process. I already mentioned the expectation was hopefully there would be a small -- a principal small group that could help force the decision. The general idea that I recall was that if it's Mr. Mulvoney -- excuse me, Mulvaney -- blocking we need to get to that point and then have a real decision taken rather than this unknowing.

Q Okay. And for the principals that were involved in that decision, was it the hope that this would get resolved and the aid would be released?
A: I don't know that for a fact. It was certainly our policy, so that was my --

Q: Okay.

A: -- my understanding. But I can't speak -- I did not discuss it with the Secretary.

Q: Okay. Were you genuinely concerned that the aid would be not -- not delivered?

A: I was focusing on trying to get there. So I think I reserved -- you know, it's like, well, we've got time, we've got to, you know, we'll keep hoping. There was that and it was a question of the White House meeting where things we were hoping for news on.

Q: How unusual is it for these types of holdups to occur? Was this extremely unusual or is this something that the system was built to withstand and work through?

A: I'm not sure I could characterize it particularly well. I mean, again, I've been back and focusing on these broad issues of -- you know, assistance is one element in the European AOR. I've been back for a couple of months. So I don't think I could --

MR. MEADOWS: Can I ask it a different way then? Obviously you're involved with a lot of other aid components. Are there other countries where aid has been held up that you're aware of?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

MR. MEADOWS: Under your portfolio?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. And we were --

MR. MEADOWS: More than one?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think, as I described, there was a period where everything was held up and then we would get instructions that, as I recall, you know, they are were allowed to --

MR. MEADOWS: Dribble it out?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a good description I think. Again, it's not a process I'm an expert on.

MR. MEADOWS: Right. So you're saying that under your portfolio all foreign aid was held up. Is that what you're saying?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: For a brief period there were -- I thought I had made a note of that -- a few days where -- where the assistance was -- I want to try to be correct and specific. Hold on 1 sec.

There was an OMB pause on all funds that came into effect on August 3rd and was lifted on August 9th. At that point OMB -- and, again, I'm reading from what my staff passed to me from the assistance coordinator's office in recalling, because I asked them about this -- at that point OMB imposed restrictions on how much we could obligate at any time. So from the 3rd to the 9th. And then they lifted, but that was when they, as you described it, sir, dribbled out.

I recall specifically that Armenia was one. There was a $9.2 million budget there and I, on a trip to Tbilisi, Georgia, I met with our Ambassador to Armenia, who had traveled to Tbilisi, and one of her concerns was, again, we are getting down toward the end of the fiscal year, we really want -- you know, again, we talk about Ukraine, but there were so many other things happening across the AOR. One was Armenia, where there was a new government, that we were trying to see
if that government would be more responsive.

MR. MEADOWS: So what you're saying is the aid was being held up in Armenia because of a new government that had come into --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, it was being held up in this broad OMB restriction. It had nothing to do with the government. Our Ambassador was expressing to me concerns --

MR. MEADOWS: Because it was a new government.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- because we really want to get these new programs going. And if can't get the money, then our strategy and our policy goals are not there.

MR. MEADOWS: So are you aware of any U.S.-Ukrainian policy directive from the State Department's point of view that's not being implemented right now?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm trying to think broadly. Well, technically, I guess that President Zelensky had not come to the White House. But that's not to say --

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but that's not a broad policy.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I agree with you.

MR. MEADOWS: I'm just saying that from a broad policy standpoint, because you put out initiatives, I was on Foreign Affairs for a number of years, you put out initiatives, that this is our Ukraine-U.S. or our U.S.-Ukraine policy.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

MR. MEADOWS: And I guess what I'm saying is, is there any U.S.-Ukraine policy initiative that's decided at your level and above
that's not being deployed right now?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: At this point, I'm not aware of any, but I would have to go back and ask if there were certain initiatives that are for one reason or another --

MR. MEADOWS: But Mr. Kent has not raised anything with you, to your knowledge?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Nothing comes to mind, sir, but I wouldn't -- you know, I'd have to go back and double-check or ask him if there's something there.

MR. MEADOWS: Thank you.

Steve.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Since the funds were released on September 11th or 12th, have the other aspects of the U.S.-Ukrainian policies been moving forward as you would like?

A I think our engagement once those funds were released, and that was an important step, under Ambassador Taylor's leadership the mission is busy and active. I would say that the current focus, the current issue surrounding Ukraine has made it a little more difficult. But I think our team is working away on all of the different strands, energy diversification, energy security in terms of the stockpiling, military reforms.

One of things I know Ambassador Volker was hopeful to start working on was an antitrust thing, how do we deal with the oligarchy system in the bigger term, and of course now Ambassador Volker is no
longer on the account.

Q  Who is performing his duties?
A  So we've looked at that, and for now, in the last -- is it 3 weeks at this point? I can't remember the date when he left.

Q  His last day I think was the 27th of September.
A  Was while we were in Italy, yeah. So 3 weeks, 4 maybe.

George Kent remains the primary person in discussions with Ulrich Brechbuhl. We discussed whether we would -- whether the Secretary or the President would want to appoint another Special Representative on certain -- at this point I don't think there is a decision per se. We cover it through the regular channels now that we have, the embassy, obviously, with the Charge, the DAS, and lower levels, office directors and desks as appropriate, myself, if there's meetings that one would need to go to for some reason.

The Europeans have asked this too: Hey, who is our point person on Ukraine? I have pointed primarily to George Kent, but at the political director level, then David Hale would be the appropriate guy.

Q  Were you tracking some of the events related to the statement that Ambassador Volker was working on, working with the Ukrainians, as a vehicle to demonstrate their --
A  I recall Gordon talking about I think he used the term "script," but I wasn't particularly tracking it.

Q  Okay.
A  They were -- you know, again, it was Gordon, and Kurt, Perry, the team in charge that were moving forward on this. And I would
occasionally ask: Do we have a date yet for the meeting or how is this going? But I wasn't tracking the day-to-day approach on that.

Q There were a handful or a couple of different vehicles discussed possibly for the Ukrainians to demonstrate that they were sufficiently committed to anticorruption efforts. One was potentially a statement, the other that has been talked about is a TV interview where the President would --

A I've seen reference to those. I was not tracking that --

Q Okay. So you don't have --

A -- or involved at my level, no.

Q So nobody engaged you --

A No, again --

Q -- as that was in --

A I think Gordon may have referenced that we're working with Zelensky, Volodymyr, as he called him. But I just don't know granularity on that.

Q When he mentioned that to you, did it give you any concerns or did you think it was just ordinary effort to achieve --

A You know, these were the guys that were tasked with this work. This is what I inherited. This is what we had, the structure moving forward, with the support of the Secretary and the President, to work on this stuff. It was irregular. We've already established that.

And, you know, as all these things come together, you know, I often wondered -- I would ask regularly, when's the meeting? Just the update.
I think my view is they've got this. I mean, Kurt Volker is an absolute professional who I know, I was very confident was very dedicated to seeing Ukraine policy through. He took this role very seriously. You know, he was an unpaid special government employee doing this. He was extremely admired by other European diplomats both in Washington, but in capitals, for his response and his briefings. And so I was very comfortable with that. And Gordon, I knew, was, you know, was acting on behalf of the President and the Secretary.

Q: Okay. We have a little bit of time left before our round ends. I want to make sure that our Members have an opportunity to answer ask you some questions if they have any.

Mr. Perry.

MR. PERRY: Thank you.

Thanks, Ambassador, for your service and for your patience here today.

In the last round there was some conversation about Ukraine desiring a meeting with the President of the United States, that it would bode well and that they desired it. Not only did we desire it, but the President of Ukraine would desire it for his own reasons, whatever they may be. Would you agree on that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

MR. PERRY: Would you also agree that -- I think you showed up is it March, March 17th or something --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: 18th was my first day.

MR. PERRY: 18th, right, by the evening. And the Presidential
election was in May?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct. May 21st I think was the first round.

MR. PERRY: Right, May 21st. But would it also be in the Ukraine President's best interest to have that meeting prior to the 21st, which is their parliamentary election?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. I'm sorry, Congressman, there's some -- some of that's not correct. So the first round of the Ukrainian Presidential election was March 31st.

MR. PERRY: Right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The second round of the Presidential election was 3 weeks later on our Easter, it was the 20 -- here it is, 21st of April. And the Ukrainian government elections were then --

MR. PERRY: July 21st.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: July 21st, thank you. Yes, correct, parliamentary.

MR. PERRY: So getting a meeting prior to July 21st would be advantageous to the new President of Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That had been the goal when I talked about the readout I got going forward after the May --

MR. PERRY: That would be one of his considerations for wanting a meeting, but it also could be a consideration for the United States to maybe hold off beyond the 21st to not influence the Ukrainian parliamentary election.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a reasonable --
MR. PERRY: Could be, right, could be?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I mean, I think that the idea, certainly what Kurt was working toward, was to try to get this meeting early before that election, but he came through the election quite strongly. It was a validation of his Presidential victory.

MR. PERRY: Now, Ambassador Taylor, he showed up in country around June 17th. Would he talk to you about any of his concerns regarding Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I had very little contact with Ambassador Taylor. He talked to Ulrich Brechbuhl, I know, on a fairly regular basis and his main interlocutor in Washington would have been George Kent.

MR. PERRY: George Kent, right.

Did you -- I mean, you had heard -- had you heard prior to seeing his statement that he wanted to know that the policy would stay the same or he would not take the job?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. I mean, that was a concern and something he talked about from the beginning of the first time I met him when he had indicated his willingness to consider it, which was May 2nd. And I knew him a little bit from years past when he was at State. So that had continued to be a concern and he was -- his concerns were satisfied --
[3:30 p.m.]

BY MR. PERRY:

Q Right.

A -- by the meeting with the Secretary on the 20th -- I want to make sure I get it -- the 28th of May.

Q And prior to the publication of the phone call between the President of the United States and President Zelensky, did Ambassador Taylor ever call you to express his concerns that there wasn't a meeting, or that funding was being --

A No, sir. I'm not the channel for Ambassador Taylor.

Q So he never talked to you about that?

A Not to my recollection.

Q And he never did resign, did he?

A No, no. In fact, he is back in Kyiv now.

Q Did you ever believe or tell anyone that you believed that the assistance, the security assistance, wouldn't be forthcoming?

A I don't believe I ever said that. I was, you know, focused on what can we do to try to break this impasse.

Q Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Why don't we take a half-an-hour lunch break and resume at 4:00 o'clock.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sounds good to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: We should try to be prompt. So that -- we don't -- because we still have a long afternoon ahead of us.

[Recess.]
[4:03 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Let's go back on the record.

Minority counsel asked you about a brief suspension of aid by OMB, which I think you said was between August 3rd and August 9th. Is that right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, that's -- excuse me. I'm sorry, Mr. Chairman. Yes, that's what my recollection is, based on what my assistance coordinator had said, and then it was completely suspended. And then after August 9th, it was being -- I believe, as the Congressman said -- dribbled out bit by bit.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, that was with respect to a broad range of foreign assistance?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: But the suspension of the Ukraine military assistance, that actually took place in July, did it not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The date that that began, or that that came to light was the 18th of July, I believe. That was the sub-PCC, which has been referred to. I was traveling. I wouldn't go to a sub-PCC normally anyway, but I believe that's what others have referenced. And it was right around that time I was advised that there is a -- I think the term "hold" was used. Nobody was quite sure where it was coming from. The speculation, certainly, was that this was coming from Mr. Mulvaney.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the freeze in Ukraine aid wasn't lifted until some point in mid-to-late September.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: September 11th, I believe, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this is quite separate and distinct from the brief interlude for a more general hold between August 3rd and August 9th?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. The Ukraine aid was a particular thing, and then, of course, the Ukraine aid is a unique thing, along with the Georgia aid, because it is, to my understanding, it is appropriated quite separately.

It is legislated, and I know that's why my DOD colleague was anxious to keep this moving. He said, absent some explanation, we have an obligation under law to move forward with this.

THE CHAIRMAN: So she or others raised at that meeting a concern of the legality of withholding that aid?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not being an expert on the term "legality," but I think that's a fair -- a fair description. I know -- again, this is DOD, so I don't want to speak for them, but that was -- my impression was that they needed to move forward because they were required to do that by law.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ambassador Reeker, we're going to try to move through.

THE CHAIRMAN: I'm sorry, I have one more question, if I could. You made reference earlier in response to the minority questions about Ambassador Sondland referring to a script. Can you tell us what
you meant by that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I recall that he was working with Zelensky to -- to work, you know, as he prepared for phone calls and engagement with the President toward this meeting, he had sort of a script. That's how he described it.

I don't know the specifics of what he meant by that, but he described it as a script for Volodymyr to help him as we move forward in this.

THE CHAIRMAN: So this was a script that Sondland had for Zelensky to use in the phone call with the President?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, I couldn't say that that was specifically to that, or more broadly, as a script for Zelensky. Here is our script moving forward. You know, Gordon was very involved working directly with Zelensky to try to move forward on all of the things that we had -- they had discussed after the meeting of the 23rd of May.

THE CHAIRMAN: Or do you know if this was a script after the call to -- for him to use publicly in order to get a White House meeting?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: And how did it come to your attention? Did Ambassador Sondland use that term in a conversation with you?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, and recall, and I couldn't tell you if it was in a phone call or something. He is like, I'm working with -- and I'm paraphrasing here. I cannot quote specifically, but I recall: I'm working with Volodymyr. We have got a script moving forward. I
just remember the term "script."

THE CHAIRMAN: And do you recall what timeframe you had that call, and would reference to your calendar assist you in finding the date of the call?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It wouldn't, I'm afraid, because I talked to Gordon here, there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there any mention of this in your documents that would refresh your recollection?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not -- no, no, sir, not that I recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Thank you. So just to follow up on this, you have no frame of reference in terms of the timing of this conversation with Ambassador Sondland?

A I mean, I had conversations with Ambassador Sondland over time about a lot of things. He was the U.S. Ambassador to the EU, so we had lots of things to talk about. Here and there, he was in Washington a couple of times. I saw him a couple of times in Europe.

Q Right. But you don't know, in terms of when over the last 6 months, this conversation about a script may have occurred?

A It was certainly since -- since the elections, since President Zelensky was in office, and post the 23rd of May, in light of the sort of strategy, the way forward that Kurt Volker had read up.

Q Do you know what the context was? If he said: I've got a script to work with President Zelensky, or he called him Volodymyr,
you said. Do you know what the context of that script was for?

A Exactly as I tried to describe to the chairman. I just remember the use of the word "script" as in Gordon, Ambassador Sondland, was working. He had always said he would take -- he was sort of the political lead for our engagement with the Ukrainians at the highest level, including President Zelensky.

Q I don't want to go back through all of the yellow tabs, but I do want to refer back to a few things that you read from them. And the first one that you referred to was a March 26th email that related some information from Ukrainian journalists in which, at some point, you read that there was a reference to the fact that Giuliani, I believe, had told Ukrainians that he represent the President.

Do you recall that?

A Yes, I recall being told that by my team. I believe, by Mr. Kent, George Kent, based on the conversations he was having with some journalists.

Well, how would one describe it? Journalists in the know, relating to him at an event he was attending in Cambridge, talking about where all of this was coming from. We were still in those weeks -- and to a degree, we still are -- what was generating, what generated this deluge of stories, false stories, accusations, threats against Masha Yovanovitch, an outstanding, you know, professional diplomat, and just a terrific human being. And as I alluded to several times, George and his team had been pulling together all of this, had identified kind of all of these stories seemed to -- seemed to distill into four -- four
narratives. They pursue one or the other, or a combination of them.

Q   I understand. But I just wanted to focus on the fact that
the Ukrainians understood, or at least the information that DAS Kent
gave to you from interactions that he had with Ukrainian sources, is
that the Ukrainian officials were told that Rudy Giuliani represents
the President of the United States?

A   Correct.

Q   Now, and as DAS Kent was able to flesh out these four strands
that you described, I believe you said that two of them included an
investigation related to the Bidens and the Burisma company, and an
investigation related to the 2016 election in some fashion. Is that
accurate?

A   That's right. And I'm happy to refer.

Q   No, I don't want you to because otherwise we will be here
all night. So, we are trying to move forward as quickly as we can.
I just want to recap a little bit.

    And the four strands, as DAS Kent laid them out, and you read,
were from an April 1st email. And then, I think, shortly thereafter,
you had a conversation, or an email communication with Under Secretary
Hale where he acknowledged to you that Ambassador Sondland's
involvement with Ukrainian policy was, quote, "irregular," unquote.
Is that right?

A   Correct.

Q   Now, in May, you referred to a Newsweek article about -- that
had in its title "Rudy Giuliani's Unfounded Claims." And you, am I
correct that you testified as you read a May 10th email that Giuliani
planned to go to Kyiv to press Zelensky to pursue these investigations.

Is that the sum and substance without being --

A That is, I believe, what the press report recounted.

Q Right.

A I did not know anything about Mr. Giuliani's plans myself.

Q But you were aware, at least as of receiving that email, that
that was reported publicly, correct?

A That it was reported in -- I think you referenced that it
was Newsweek in that one.

Q Were you aware of a New York Times article that also addressed
Rudy Giuliani's potential trip on or about May 9th?

A It does sound broadly familiar. I mean, I was aware of the
press that was reporting that, I think -- again, I don't get much
opportunity to watch television, to be honest, but I do believe there
were -- Giuliani himself was saying I'm going to -- or at least widely
quoted as saying he was going to Ukraine.

Q But based on your emails that you have now recited to us,
you routinely receive press clippings related to issues of relevance
to your portfolio, correct?

A At that particular time, because my -- my superiors, my chain
of command were asking: Do you have any feel for where this is coming
from, and why now?

And so, again, being a week, 2 weeks on the ground, I was turning
to George and his team to -- can we figure all of this out?
I couldn't possibly read even all of the emails and tweets and stuff that they forwarded up, but it was to give me an idea of, again, these four, what they had distilled into four seeming narratives.

Q And part of the reason that you were asking Mr. Kent to compile this information is that you were getting questions from your superiors about it, too, right?

A Right, and as I did, and then as I think I mentioned clearly, there was a question while I was in -- traveling. I think I was in Germany at the time -- to make sure that Under Secretary Hale was receiving the right amount, you know, that he was getting what he needed too, to keep him broadly abreast of what was being talked about in the press on this.

Q Right. And there was an email to you that said that Under Secretary Hale wanted to be more, quote, "tightly lashed up," unquote, with Ukraine matters, right?

A I believe that's what the email said without looking at it.

Q So there was a desire for more information about what's going on in Ukraine from your superiors?

A What the press was reporting. We get reporting from our embassy on an -- Embassy Kyiv is a mill that does excellent analysis and reporting.

What we were trying to track in those early weeks was: What is all of this coming out, and where is it coming from, and what are the themes so that we could at least be aware and know.

Q Of course. That makes perfect sense. Let me show you what
is marked as deposition exhibit 1.

[Majority Exhibit No. 1 was marked for identification.]

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q It is an article from The New York Times dated May 9th. Just take a quick look at this if you could.

A Uh-huh.

Q Are you familiar with this article?

A It sounds familiar. I know that I don't know Kenneth Vogel himself, but I know his byline.

Q Right. I'm not asking if you know Kenneth Vogel himself. I'm wondering if this is familiar to you because you saw it around the time that it was published.

A I couldn't say on May 9th. I arrived back on a, you know, red-eye flight from Baghdad and London, and went almost directly to Masha Yovanovitch's honoring ceremony at the National Defense University.

Q Right. So this is similar to that Newsweek article that you had in your email. I don't know whether you would have received this article in your email as well, but --

A Probably not, because I think it probably would have been a normal press clips and we get lots of these compilations.

Q So what was the difference in the Newsweek article versus this New York Times article?

A You would have to ask the people that sent it to me.
Q All right, because notably, and I will read the second and third paragraphs.

It says: "Mr. Giuliani says he plans to travel to Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital in the coming days, and wants to meet with the Nation's President-elect to urge him to pursue inquiries that allies of the White House contend could yield new information about two matters of intense interest to Mr. Trump.

"One is the origin of the special counsel's investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election. The other is the involvement of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.'s, son in a gas company owned by an Ukraine oligarch."

Do you know which gas company that is referring to?

A That is Burisma, right?

Q So this is consistent with what you were hearing at the time, correct?

A Can I write on this, or is this yours?

Q I will give you another copy that you can write on. This is consistent with what you were hearing at the time, correct?

A Yeah, I mean, I think this was very much the narrative that was out there at that time. This was after the late April post-election. It means Zelensky was now fully elected. He was the 20th of May would have been inaugurated, and this is very much similar stories that were circulating.

Q Now, earlier today you also -- you read, actually, a WhatsApp message between you and Ambassador Bill Taylor on May 26th, where
Ambassador Taylor referenced something, the Giuliani-Biden issue. Do you recall that?

A Yes.

Q So when you received that text message from Ambassador Taylor, you understood what he was referring to. Right?

A Yeah. I mean, I think the general idea is, this is one of those strands, one of those narratives that was very much there. I think Ambassador Volker described it as a distraction from our focus on Ukraine and policy.

Q And Ambassador Volker would have described it to you as a distraction to the policy around this same time, in May?

A When Bill was -- Bill Taylor, that is -- was expressing his concerns and reservations about, you know, I can't take this job if there's going to be a change of policy and approach to Ukraine. That's why he wanted to meet with the Secretary. Ulrich Brechbuhl had confirmed that would happen and they were looking for a date.

Q Right. I understand that. I'm just asking, when you said that Ambassador Volker also reiterated something along this line -- if I can pin a time on that.

A When I said to him, Ambassador Volker, you know, I think Bill has got some cold feet, and I may have even shared with him some of the WhatsApps or messages. Here is what Bill is concerned about. He was saying, yes, that's -- that's distraction. We need to focus on moving our policy forward. I mean, I think that's the, you know, Giuliani, his distraction.
Q Right. But like you, Ambassador Volker indicated he understood that this was -- that Rudy Giuliani was fomenting this interest in these investigations at that time, right?

A Correct. I think that's what Mr. Giuliani was saying himself quite publicly.

Q Correct. So that's on May 26th, and then you go into the May 28th meeting with Secretary Pompeo. And who was at that meeting that you recall?

A To the best of my recollection, it was the Secretary, of course, Bill Taylor; Kurt Volker joined us; Ulrich Brechbuhl was there; myself; and I think George was there, but I don't know that. And I haven't wanted to ask him in this last week because I didn't think it was appropriate.

Q And during that meeting, was there discussion about the May 23rd White House meeting?

A Yes.

Q And what do you recall being discussed with the Secretary about the May 23rd meeting?

A Kurt Volker gave a readout of the meeting because Gordon -- well, Gordon had been in the May 23rd meeting, and they -- you know, the general tone was the President, was the inaugural team, or the Three Amigos -- his term, not mine -- had come back, gone to this briefing, and the President was not in a good mood.

He was just unhappy about Ukraine, did not like Ukraine, and expressing a lot of skepticism, and then Kurt outlined, you know, we
just kept pressing ahead and saying, but Mr. President, there are these opportunities. We have got Zelensky. This is a new Ukraine. We need to keep working on this. And that produced the readout that Kurt had given to me on the 23rd, and was considered the way forward.

Q Right. And it was a pretty unanimous view from those who went to the inauguration that Zelensky was a true reformer and would be good for Ukraine, correct?

A I think that is fair to say, yes.

Q Did Ambassador Volker, or -- well, let me ask you this: At that meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the 28th, did the name Rudy Giuliani come up?

A I cannot say for sure. I really can't.

Q In any of your conversations with Ambassador Volker about the May 23rd meeting, did the name Rudy Giuliani come up?

A I know that there was an understanding, certainly, from Kurt and others that were there that Rudy Giuliani is feeding the President a lot of very negative views about Ukraine. And --

Q Did you understand that that was, at least, part of the basis for the President's displeasure with Ukraine?

A Yes. That's fair to say. That was my -- that was what the takeaway was.

Q Did -- in any of the conversations related to, or that followed that May 23rd meeting, did Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, did anyone give you the impression that they -- that the President wanted them to coordinate or consult with Mr. Giuliani about
Ukraine?

A Not specifically. I mean, I've seen that reported since, so I know that that idea is out there. But I did understand that Kurt, for instance, had mentioned he was talking -- talking to Rudy, and the goal was to try to help. I think Kurt felt -- I don't want to speak for him too much, but, certainly, the understanding from the -- it was the tail end of a conversation, I recall. And he said, you know, I can -- I can help him understand that this is a new Ukraine, and I think he just felt he could talk to him and change his view, which would then, hopefully, change the President's view.

Q Right. So just to recap. Entering that May 28th meeting, you were aware that Mr. Giuliani wanted Ukraine to investigate Burisma in connection with the Bidens and the 2016 election in some fashion?

A He said that very publicly, yeah.

Q But you were aware of that. That's what I just want to be clear about.

A Yeah.

Q And you had had a conversation with Ambassador Volker to that effect as well, prior to this meeting?

A Not specifically on Biden Burisma, this and that, but Rudy's -- Kurt, I think, called it several times a distraction.

Q So, but he was aware that Rudy Giuliani was posing a distraction in Ukraine?

A Yes.

Q And he was aware, as you just testified, that the President,
that he needed to convince Giuliani about Ukraine in order to convince
the President?

A I think he thought that at least would be helpful.

Q Right. So it would be, I mean, it's pretty basic deductive
reasoning, that in order to convince someone of something, you have
to know what they think, right?

A Well, I'm not -- I'm not a cognitive scientist. I mean, I
think you can go into not knowing what somebody thinks and go about
convincing them before they -- before you know what their view is.

Q Well, let me ask you: Was it your understanding as of this
May 28th meeting, that Ambassador Volker understood what Rudy Giuliani
was advocating in relation to Ukraine?

A As of May 28th, I do not know that for sure. I cannot read
Kurt Volker's mind, nor did we have in-depth conversations on that.
I do know that we all were aware from press reports, from everything
else, his own television statements that Rudy Giuliani --

Q There's no question it was a secret. There's no question
it was a secret. I'm trying to understand everyone's basis of
knowledge going into this meeting. And Bill Taylor, you said you had
a conversation, or at least WhatsApp?

A Bill Taylor had said, you know, I'm concerned that this
Giuliani-Biden, as he called it again -- I won't go back to the
email -- is going to cause a change in the policy, and if that's going
to be the case, I'm not -- I'm not your guy.

Q And you understood that the Biden was a reference to this
Burisma investigation. Right?

A I think broadly, yeah. That it was all Hunter Biden, Burisma, the company.

Q So if Ambassador Taylor's, one of his main concerns was this Giuliani-Biden issue that may influence Ukraine policy, and as you testified earlier, he wanted reassurances from Secretary Pompeo that the policy wouldn't change, you still have no recollection as to whether or not Mr. Giuliani was discussed at that May 28th meeting with the Secretary?

A I actually don't specifically.

Q Well, what did the Secretary say to Ambassador Taylor at that meeting?

A The Secretary reiterated what we were trying to do with Ukraine and the opportunities we had with Zelensky, and that that was the basis on which we were going to move forward.

I think he welcomed the opportunity to talk to Bill Taylor as well. I don't believe they had met before. And I think by the end of the meeting, he came away feeling, yep, Bill was the guy he wanted to go out in this role as the Charge, and Bill was, in his own words, paraphrasing, reassured and felt he could go out and do this job in good faith.

Q And just to be put a pin on it, what was he reassured about?

A You would have to ask him, but he told me, "I'm good to go."

Q That's all he said to you? And you don't remember how --

A He came out of that saying, good to go, you know. My problem
set was to take care of the mission. Was Bill going to be the guy? We were still working on the bureaucrats of it, but shortly thereafter, even that worked out. That he -- they found a mechanism through a law that they hadn't looked at before that allowed him to be --

Q I understand. And you described that already. And I don't mean to be the rude. We just are going to be here all night if we don't start moving through.

A Believe me, my weekends are rare, so I will also be happy.

Q So then following that meeting, was it your understanding that these -- was it your understanding that these Three Amigos, as you've described them -- I know not your words --

A Yeah, as Ambassador Sondland has described them.

Q -- would lead the Ukraine policy for the State Department? How was this going to be --

A For the State Department and the White House. They were the three leads.

Q And did you have an understanding that the President had directed that?

A Yes, Gordon was very clear in that, that the President has asked me to do this; we will lead this up here. That was very clear in the readout I got after the May 23rd meeting.

Q And you had also said several times today that Secretary Pompeo had also affirmed that arrangement too. Is that right?

A Yeah. And I know Gordon was in touch with him. I know
Secretary Pompeo thought very highly of Ambassador Volker. I mean he -- Ambassador Volker reported to the Secretary.

Q And so the President directed this relationship, Secretary Pompeo approved of it, and this was the, sort of, I think what Under Secretary Hale called the irregular arrangement?

A No. His reference to "irregular" was Ambassador Sondland's engagement in things that were outside the regular purview of the Ambassador to the European Union.

Q So in June and July, and I'm going to ask a general question, and then if we can try to drill down -- in June and July, do you recall having any conversations with anyone or receiving any emails that might have given you some information related to this idea that the President or Rudy Giuliani wanted Ukraine to initiate these investigations to the Biden and Burisma and the 2016 election, and that that was a message that was conveyed to the Ukrainians by anyone on behalf of the United States?

A I'm sorry to do this, but can you say that again?

Q Are you aware of whether any U.S. official relayed to any Ukrainian official that the United States, writ large, and perhaps the President specifically --

A Yeah.

Q -- wanted those two investigations to be the initiated by the Ukrainians?

A By an official, an American official, no, I'm not aware of that.
Q So you are not aware of whether or not Ambassador Volker had any conversations with any Ukrainian officials about them initiating these investigations?

A No. Kurt and I did not discuss that.

Q And you're not aware of whether Ambassador Sondland had any conversations with any Ukrainian officials?

A No. I mean, I know he was having conversations with Ukrainian officials, but exactly what he was saying, I don't know.

Q All right. Well, let me ask this question: At what point, in the year 2019, did you come to understand that anyone, any American official, had been advocating to Ukrainian officials to initiate these investigations?

A I did not come to that understanding. I heard that. I saw that in the press, the suggestions of it. That was, certainly, you know, things we were asking, but there was no clear indication of that. That was not the policy that I was aware of, the strategy that we were moving forward on. This was a Rudy Giuliani thing.

Q Were you aware -- but you did indicate that you were aware that Ambassador Volker was speaking to Rudy Giuliani, correct?

A Correct, that he was -- what he indicated to me was, he was going to talk to Rudy and try to, sort of, clear up some of his misconceptions -- Rudy's misconceptions -- about Ukraine.

Q And did he ever report back to you on what happened in those conversations?

A I think I remember him saying once or twice, I spoke to Rudy,
but, you know, again, I was not in this -- in this loop.

Q No, I'm just asking. I understand. That's very clear.

The question is just: What readouts, or what reports are you getting back from Ambassador Volker about any of his conversations with Rudy Giuliani?

A Really, none. We did not, you know, we didn't have an opportunity to discuss it in any great detail unless, I mean, I can -- the WhatsApp, I have all of the WhasApps with Kurt, and I think he may have mentioned he met with -- that's George -- I don't think he ever -- let's see, that's April, that's May.

He is asking about Bill Taylor going out. Yeah. So he's talking to -- he wants to -- knowing that I was going to -- his approach was, you know, Poroshenko will soon be gone. Zelensky is going into his place. This is on the 15th of May -- he will be inaugurated soon.

Q Can you move forward to sort of the end of June, early July. Do you have any conversations with him around then?

A Let's see. No, late June was totally about Georgia. I had nothing to do with that. One of the things we were in regular touch with, is I kind of tried to touch base on where things were. It was Kurt's role in this -- negotiated with the Russians, because we had talked for a long time, including at the May 28th meeting, that, you know, we were waiting for the Russians to respond about another meeting, Kurt and his counterpart, and they had been pushing off.

And up until the time he resigned, they never agreed to meet again. They told me when I was in Moscow a few weeks ago, Oh, yeah, we'll do
it, we're getting ready. But they never had. So that was a question.

Q Well, let me try it this way: Were you aware that Ambassador Volker and DAS Kent went to Toronto in early July for a Ukrainian --

A Yeah, there was a big Ukrainian aid conference in July.

Originally, I think the Deputy Secretary was possibly going. There had been a possibility of -- that I might go, and I was traveling on something else, and I know Kurt went, and --

Q Did you get a readout or a report back from Ambassador Volker about what transpired there and any meetings he may have had with Ukrainian officials?

A I don't recall anything from that, no.

Q He didn't tell you about a private conversation he had with President Zelensky?

A Not that I'm recalling.

Q Were you familiar with a July 10th meeting at the White House where Ambassador Sondland attended, along with Secretary Perry, Ambassador Bolton, and a couple of Ukrainian officials?

A That does sound familiar. I'm sorry to do this, but let's try to put myself -- yeah, I was speaking at a conference on freedom of the press, a ministerial meeting in London. I don't think there was any -- again, those were the guys that were charged in doing Ukraine, and I don't -- it sounds familiar, but I don't have any recollection of that.

Q You don't have any specific recollection of getting a report back?
A  No.
Q  And the only readout you got from the July 25th call was from
Ambassador Volker saying that it was a great call?
A  Yeah. I never saw -- we don't get transcripts of the
President's call. The President's --
Q  I know that. I'm just asking you, that was the only readout
you ever got?
A  Yeah, I don't recall having anybody ever mentioning it too
much.
Q  DAS Kent didn't tell you anything about it?
A  He might have. I just -- I don't have any specific
recolletion of that.
The 25th of July, again, you know, was -- if there was something,
I was meeting with a new Greek Government in Athens, and that was, I
think, when I came back already, that was when we were in that PCC
process trying to push forward, find out --
Q  So you went to the PCC meeting on July 31st?
A  July 31st.
Q  But not the one on July 23rd?
A  No, because I was in Greece.
Q  So prior to the July 31st meeting, you didn't get a download
as to what happened on the presidential phone call with the President
of Ukraine?
A  I don't recall specifics of it, no. I knew there was a phone
call. I had that in my notes. And that was -- that was the 25th of
July, but the details of it, I don't have.

Q Were you aware of whether or not, or did you hear at any point that Mr. Giuliani may have met with any senior Ukrainian officials in early August?

A I don't -- I don't remember specific things. He had been talking publicly about going to Ukraine, but then he didn't, if I recall. So I -- I don't have any particular recollection of --

Q And were you -- did you have any conversations with Ambassador Volker or Ambassador Sondland about a potential press statement that the Ukrainians would issue in early to mid-August related to any of these investigations?

A No, I mentioned earlier at some point in probably this timeframe you're referencing broadly, Gordon talking about a script. I remember the word "script" for moving forward on this, the script with Zelensky.

And it sounds familiar now. I couldn't tell you if I'm conflating something I have now read in transcripts or press, but that concept sounds familiar. I don't recall somebody saying -- I mean, there's no reason they would come to tell me that. But that does -- I have to say that does sound familiar.

Q And this is now the second time that when we've asked you about that early to mid-August timeframe, you've referred back to that conversation with Ambassador Sondland about a script. Is it your belief that the conversation you had with him about a script was in that timeframe?
A  Again, I have to say, I just can't remember. I shared with
you to the best of my ability, that I remember Gordon talking about:
I'm working with Zelensky with Volodymyr and, you know, we have got
a script to move forward.

Q  And then you were aware -- or when did you learn that the
hold on the Ukrainian security and military assistance became public.
Do you recall?

A  Okay. No, I don't, I mean, in the -- we were hearing about
it, you know, as it came out. And, again, we were trying to work this --

Q  Well, let me ask you about that. You obviously were working
the PCC process. Did you ever get an explanation for why the Ukraine
aid was being held?

A  No.

Q  Did you ask?

A  We -- I was asked, and I was told through my people that we
think it's a Mulvaney -- that this has come from Mulvaney. There was
different thoughts. Nobody could -- the hope was that through the PCC
process, he would, sort of, determine, find that out, and force an
actual decision, rather than somebody says OMB is holding this, and
some people say it's Mulvaney has ordered that.

There are references that I have now since read in press reporting
or in transcripts to, you know, at the earlier -- earlier iterations
of the PCC process, the sub-PCC, or something, someone from OMB saying
that this is being held, but definitively, I did not know.

Q  Were you aware at any time in August when this issue was
presented directly to the President again? Did you hear?

A No. No, sir.

Q After, you know, we discussed those texts earlier that Ambassador Taylor wrote that some of which have been made public. Around that time, in early September, did you have any conversations with anyone in the State Department about the reason why the aid was being held up?

A I think we were in, sort of, staff meetings when we would catch up on these things. And I know George was hearing different things that were speculations --

Q What was he hearing?

A That these various stories that, you know, was this tied to something? That was a question. Was this tied to something to do with investigations? Was this tied to Rudy? But nobody knew for sure, and then, of course, by September 11th, the hold was -- if you call it a hold -- was lifted.

Q Did you ever have any conversation?

A This is helpful. I'm trying not go through all of my emails.

Q Do you want to clarify something?

A Yeah, let me just look at something here, because this may be helpful. Oh, right. This does help. So please let me go back to July 29th, and this is, I just mentioned that George was saying there was this -- this idea out there that D.C. had pushed Kyiv on investigating the Bidens.

Q I'm sorry. What are you looking at right there?
A I'm looking at an email where George was updating me on something he -- that another person we know out in the think tank world had heard that last Thursday, so that would have been the July call, that D.C. pushed Kyiv on investigating the Bidens. And George said: I said it wasn't in the call, but we're working on particulars of a visit, dates TBD.

Q Sorry. So who is this email between?

A This is from George Kent to myself, and copied Bill Taylor.

Q And this was a forward?

A No, this was just George saying, you know, someone else had heard this. This was, again, part of this broad speculation of things that was out there. It didn't clarify anything for us.

Q So someone at a think tank had heard from the Ukrainian side that that was discussed?

A I can't say that for sure.

Q Well, maybe -- why don't you just read the email?

A "He'd heard that in the call last Thursday, D.C. pushed Kyiv on investigating the Bidens. I said it wasn't in the call, but looking forward that we were working on particulars of a visit, dates TBD."

Q Okay. And you've now read the call, right? The transcript, the record?

A When we were in New York, yeah.

Q And is that -- the rumor that the think tank person heard, accurate?

A I'd have to go back to the specifics of that -- that --
MR. MALINOWSKI: Can I ask who the think tank person was?

MS. DAUM: If we could get some measure of confidentiality about that, if it is necessary to be publicly released.

THE CHAIRMAN: We need to know who it is. So you are going to have to answer the question, I'm afraid.

I would ask all Members, again, I would reiterate to all members and staff -- although I think members are the issue, not the staff -- that the testimony here should not leave this room. But, you know, if there are other witnesses that have sources of information that are relevant, we do need to know need to know who they are.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, understanding that George Kent has already spoken to you, so it was -- the subject line of his email was [redacted], who is a former Ambassador to Ukraine. I'm trying to remember when, and now I'm trying to remember what --

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q So it's not just a think tank person. It's a former Ambassador --

A Yeah.

Q -- who's now with a think tank?

A Right.

Q Okay. Did you finish the email? I'm sorry?

A Yeah, and that's in keeping with, you know, the stories that were circulating. What we had was no -- no clarity or definition. What -- and sort of my Ukraine box, we are still working on getting that date. Is there any, you know --
Q No, I understand that's what you were doing. But just to be clear because our time is up, that was a July 29th email?

A July 29th.

THE CHAIRMAN: And I'm sorry, I think when you did read a portion of it, you just started with the word "he." Is that how the email starts?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, because the subject line says: 

"[Redacted]: Is it true that" and then the text of the email starts "He'd heard that in the call last Thursday."

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. The time is with the minority.

MR. CASTOR: Mark exhibit 2.

[Minority Exhibit No. 2 was marked for identification.]

MR. CASTOR: Do you need a Politico article?

MR. GOLDMAN: I will take it.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: So I'm afraid I did a little scrawl on your exhibit 1.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q I just marked exhibit 2. That is also an article by Ken Vogel.

A Right.

Q It is a Politico story by Ken Vogel before he went to The New York Times.

A Okay.

Q In January of 2017.
Okay.

And it goes through various efforts of people affiliated with Ukraine to, you know, sabotage candidate Trump. Are you familiar with this article?

I am not, no, sir.

The paragraph -- I will just read it, one of the first paragraphs.

The second paragraph is: "Ukrainian Government officials tried to help Hillary Clinton and undermine Trump by publicly questioning his fitness for office. They also disseminated documents implicating a top Trump aid in corruption and suggested they were investigating the matter, only to back away after the election. And they helped Clinton's allies research damaging information on Trump and his advisors, a Politico investigation found."

And this is, you know, an 18-page story going through various --

I didn't read it, living in Italy at the time.

And so are you familiar with the generalized allegation that the President or his supporters worried that Ukrainians were working against him?

I am now, today, or in the last few months, yeah.

And some of the concerns -- and this goes through several categories of reporting -- one involves a Ukrainian-American named, a consultant for the Democratic National Committee, received a bunch of money, had some outreach with the embassy.

Is that an allegation you are familiar with?
No, it is not. Well, I should say, again, I can't help but having read -- I mean, I read the press in the last few weeks and over time, and it was not something I was tracking particularly on Ukraine.

Q Okay.

A I had no connectivity to Ukraine until, you know, except for, sort of, focused on the Russia angle and the war until later. So I don't want to be disingenuous and suggest I've never heard that. I've heard it is all part of the stream of stuff out there. My focus was on, you know, running, you know, staffing, running our mission, and implementing U.S. policy.

Q The first eight or nine pages talks about and some of the efforts that she undertook, and some of the efforts that the embassy, the Ukrainian embassy to the United States, took in helping her.

And then the story pivots into the involvement of a Ukrainian investigative journalist and subsequent parliamentarian, and I don't believe he is currently in the parliamentarian, Serhiy Leshchenko, and this relates to the involvement of the Manafort ledgers?

A The name is familiar, but I don't know.

Q And as part of Leshchenko's journalism, you know, the aspects of the ledgers came out. Were you aware of the Ukrainian tie to the -- to the Manafort work, the publication of Manafort's work in Ukraine by Ukrainians?

A You know, I probably read The New York Times or The Wall Street Journal or reports at that time. It wasn't something I was
focused on beyond being --

Q Okay.

A -- a broadly interested citizen.

Q Fair enough. The story also talks about the op ed we discussed earlier, Ambassador Chaly prepared an op ed in The Hill, which we have copies of that, but unless you would like me to mark it for the record, we'll just stipulate to that.

On page 15 of this report, of this story, there's -- I'm sorry, on page 14, a Ukrainian minister of internal affairs, Arsen Avakov is mentioned. Are you familiar with Avakov?

A That name does not ring a bell, no.

Q He was and is a Minister of Internal Affairs in the Ukraine. Anyway, he had, according to this Vogel reporting, had some negative statements about the candidate Trump on Twitter and --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- called him a clown. Some Facebook posts called him, or referenced him as a misfit. Were you aware that Avakov, or anyone in the Ukrainian Government was engaged in an effort to making statements like that about the candidate Trump?

A I was not until more recently when this became an issue. I think as I stated, George -- and mostly George, but his team were kind of my -- to the extent I needed to be aware of context in Ukraine and what was going on, that this was its own strand of, you know, part of what had fed into all of this. But I was not, at the time, current with it, or following it with any closeness.
Q If the President had concerns about Ukrainians trying to work for Secretary Clinton and defeat him, would it be fair for him to want somebody to look into that if he thought it improperly led to the start of the Mueller probe?
[5:03 p.m.]

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q    And if he had a good faith belief that these issues were out there, could that be -- have been a motivating factor for some of the issues discussed in exhibit 1, the other Vogel article?

A    Again, I can't prejudge the President's view. He's the President. He makes his own decisions.

Q    Was that your understanding of what was concerning the President about Ukraine?

A    I understood from -- certainly from press reports and from George's background -- backgroundering and explaining the context, that President Trump does not like Ukraine.

And that was very evident in the meeting when the delegation, after the inauguration, went -- you know, I don't -- Ukraine is a bad place, I don't like Ukraine -- and that Kurt and Gordon and I believe Senator Johnson and Secretary Perry were continuing to try to tell him: But this is a new Ukraine, this is Zelensky, and here what is we want to do to move forward.

Q    And his negative energy on Ukraine, as far as you know, it didn't relate to political reasons, did it?

A    I couldn't speculate. It was just relayed to me that he didn't like Ukraine.

Q    And his skeptical views of Ukraine, that wasn't relayed to you in the context of him having political -- of thinking that if he -- you know, if these issues got -- somebody got to the bottom of,
it would have a political upside for him, that wasn't relayed to you, was it?

A I mean, there was media reporting to that. I mean, that's, I think, what Mr. Giuliani was saying quite publicly.

Q But his deep-rooted skeptical view of Ukraine was just a personally held belief of the President as far as you understood?

A I don't know that.

Q Okay. During the breaks, or I guess the last break, I had -- leave the SCIF, get reconnected with the communications.

A You couldn't let go.

Q Well. And I guess some of our Members brought to Mr. Jordan's attention -- who can't be here today, and he apologizes. He has tried to be at all of these, and he appreciates your testimony here today. I'll note that.

A Former Ohioan. Give my regard.

Q He takes this investigation, all the depositions very seriously, and he has attended just about every one. So he is sorry that he couldn't be here today, appreciates your service.

Anyway, I guess the news reports had come out this morning before you appeared and signaled what you might testify to. And so he was -- there has been some just questions about whether that was being pushed out from you, or your camp, or whether that was coming from either our side or their side. I could say it wasn't coming from our side. I had no idea what you were --

A As you can imagine, I know a lot of journalists from my days
as a spokesman, and they've all been extraordinarily frustrated that I will not talk to them.

Q Okay.

A They were -- I took calls regularly because they were -- or responded to emails, "Can we have your opening statement?" And as you know, I did not prepare one.

Q Okay. So to the extent there were stories written about what you were going to say, it didn't come from you or your camp?

A I think there's lots of people that chatter about this stuff and I'll be -- I saw a couple of things. There was a Daily Beast piece that came out last night that I -- now I can't even recall what it said, but I remember thinking, well, that's not -- I mean, it just had, like, inaccuracies about me. But that's the nature of this business.

Q Okay. But you didn't forecast your testimony to anybody?

A No, sir.

Q So if anybody did --

A The only thing I've ever done was -- and, frankly, State Department journalists have a much better grasp of understanding what the role is of an Acting Assistant Secretary for Europe. There were some press stories that were characterizing me as in charge of Ukraine policy, which has not been the case.

Q Okay. When did you first hear about the -- you spoke to us earlier this morning about George Kent's four narratives that he wrote up, and I believe you related that one of them had Burisma in it.

A Uh-huh.
Q And it was in, I think you said, in paren, corrupt gas company?

A Yeah. He was -- for me, the neophyte who arrived a week before, he was laying that out, what is Burisma. At that, I think I was aware of that it was a gas company. I'm not terribly familiar with it.

Q Are you familiar, it's run by a former ecology minister, Zlochevsky?

A I can't say I actually know that name, no.

Q Okay. And would it surprise you that they've been under investigation at various points for money laundering, tax evasion?

A You're talking about Ukraine, so it doesn't surprise me at all.

Q Okay. In 2014, the company embarked on an initiative to bolster their image, I guess, and place people on their board to help them govern. Are you familiar with that effort?

A Well, I know that Hunter Biden went on their board. I'm not familiar with the effort per se, I'm just familiar with the stories that he went on the board. And I had some general conversations early on when I was trying to grasp what is all this about, George was able to give me some basic parameters.

Q Okay. And did anybody ever relate to you, does Hunter Biden have a particular expertise in corporate governance?

A I don't know.

Q Okay.
A  I've never met Hunter Biden.

Q  Do we know, does anybody at the State Department know if he was put on the board for any other reason other than the fact that he's related to the former Vice President?

A  I couldn't say. I don't know the board and I don't know him.

Q  Okay. In any of your conversations with Ambassador Volker, did he ever relate to you that if there are corrupt Ukrainians or Ukrainians doing bad things that, you know, if that's the subject, and they're at Burisma or some other type of oligarch-affiliated enterprise, that Zelensky ought to reopen those investigations?

A  I do not recall that specifically. I know Kurt and I, long before I got this kind of out-of-the-blue transplant back to Washington and this job, when I was approached about and in the process of potentially being the candidate for nomination to Ukraine, and that Kurt had been named, I talked to him about his broad interest in what he believed was the critical piece in the Ukraine puzzle was somehow dealing with the oligarchs.

And his path toward that, I found very interesting, was looking at antitrust legislation and trying to borrow from what the U.S. had done, and that there is a certain difficulty in that if you go to the Department of Justice right now, antitrust is not what it was back in the trustbuster days, the early days of U.S. antitrust law.

So he needed sort of more kind of almost historical research to look at that and what ways forward, and to me it was just very interesting and anticipating potentially that I would end up at some
point as Ambassador. We kind of looked forward to that. And I think I said to him, you know, I am actually sort of disappointed that I won't be able to learn all this and work with you on that.

But I know that was still part of his priority as he went forward, and I do remember sending him one email after Zelensky won the election just saying: Hey, Ukraine is a democracy, they had good elections and elected this guy. And that's still where we are, is how can we carry this forward.

Q In terms of any of the Ukrainians investigating corruption or reopening cases, whether it's Burisma or any other case, that would relate to Ukrainians, not investigating Americans. Is that your understanding?

A I don't think I probably thought about it.

Q Okay. I mean, did anyone relate to you that somebody wanted the Ukrainian prosecutors to investigate Americans?

A I don't recall except there was all this stuff about Hunter Biden. So I don't know if that was --

Q And do you know whether that like was an investigation of Hunter Biden or an investigation of Ukrainians and how they --

A I really don't, I don't. I never read the stories of all this to that.

Q But it could have been either way?

A I just don't know.

Q Okay.

MR. MEADOWS: You can go ahead.
BY MR. CASTOR:

Q  Earlier this morning or this afternoon when we were going
through I guess the yellow tabs in your binder, I was just wondering
how that came about. Was that like an organic effort where the majority
just saw the yellow tabs and started asking you about it?

A  So, yeah, I mean, because I find things like this amusing.
    So when I passed these emails to my counsel, who's a very nice
    like assistant paralegal, since I work 20 hours a day and don't have
time to do these things myself and couldn't ask my staff to do it, I
had printed a couple of things on yellow paper because I had it by my
printer.
    And in a few cases actually there was too much yellow paper in,
so other things got printed. It was ones that I wanted that were key
ones, like the one I had taken out here that is the readout from the
23rd meeting at the White House.
    And her very nice assistant took, when she made the copies, took
all the ones that were on yellow paper and stuck a yellow sticky on
it so that I would know.

Q  Okay.

A  And that's all it was, so --

Q  Okay.

A  And some of it was just because the paper was in the printer.

Sorry.

Q  You have to understand, from the vantage point of the
minority when you see these things transpiring all of a sudden you're
reading selected yellow-tabbed emails, our side wonders how that comes
to be.

A It wasn't -- well, now you know. I should have taken them
off. I don't think I even noticed they were there.

MR. MEADOWS: Let me jump in real quick.

So the email you read just a little bit ago, you mentioned that
a think tank individual --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Whom I know a little bit, former --

MR. MEADOWS: -- sent an email on the 29th of July. Did you not
find that curious why he would be asking that kind of question on the
29th of July about a phone call?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, I knew there was a phone call on the
25th.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah, but how would he know?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, this is Washington, I mean.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, but he worked for Burisma and for the Atlantic
Council. Did you know that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not sure I did.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. I mean, so I find it just very curious that
here's a guy that has connections with Burisma, not one but multiple
contacts with Burisma, would know about a phone call between the
President of the United States and the President of Ukraine. You
didn't find that curious?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: To be honest, Congressman, I probably
didn't. I looked at it, and I saw what George had said, that no --
MR. MEADOWS: Let me ask it in a different way then. How often do think tank people call you about private phone calls or your subordinates about private phone calls between two leaders of sovereign states?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That kind of stuff goes on all the time because there's constantly speculation and rumors and leaks and whispers. I mean, I couldn't put a date to it, but this town is full of former officials.

MR. MEADOWS: So you say you know him. How do you know him?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He was a former Foreign Service officer, [redacted].

MR. MEADOWS: Is that the only context that you know him in?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I mean, I think I may have seen him at the Atlantic Council. I'm not sure if he is involved in other things.

You know, I think I had lunch with him some years ago, talking about when I was going to Milan and we were supporting the U.S. pavilion at the U.S. -- at the World's Fair, the Expo 2015, and he was possibly interested in that. I have a vague recollection.

MR. MEADOWS: So the response from your team was, no, that was not part of it, and to your knowledge there was no further contact?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I don't know if anybody's -- how often people hear from [redacted], or I may have bumped into him here or there, but I'm not particularly close to him. I don't know him that well.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. And do you think that -- would you
characterize Secretary Pompeo's leadership towards Ukraine as a good thing? I mean, how would you characterize it?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think he's been supportive of our policy and our goals. That's what he underscored to Ambassador Taylor in the meeting on the 28th. We haven't talked about it in any great detail. I joined one of his meetings where Kurt -- who, as I've mentioned, reported to him, and they had meetings where I wasn't able to attend. And he's remained certainly interested. It's, you know, it's up there in importance. You've got this hot war going on, 13,000 people already killed, so --

MR. MEADOWS: So would you say that Secretary Pompeo has been supportive of your efforts and your job overall?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Of my broad efforts in the European Bureau?

Yeah.

MR. MEADOWS: So any headlines that would say that you're being negative toward Secretary Pompeo would be misplaced then?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That I'm being negative toward Secretary Pompeo?

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know if there is such a headline, but --

MR. MEADOWS: But if there were would they be misplaced?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I would think so. I haven't had -- it looks like you're passing around the headline.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, I mean, it says, "Official to testify that
Pompeo blocks show of support for ousted Ambassador." And then the article goes on to give more of a negative connotation about your view of Secretary Pompeo.

Would you say that that is an accurate reflection of your personal views?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No.

MR. MEADOWS: Okay. I yield back.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, my -- I think it's only fair to add there, my view is that Ambassador Yovanovitch was subjected to just really outrageous press coverage and innuendo and threats coming from high levels, retweeting irresponsible journalism, which affected her personally, her safety, affected our mission, reflected on the United States, and it was pretty outrageous.

And I pushed, as you know, within the Department more robust language as we were -- we proposed putting out a statement, and that was not approved in that way. And so we used what we did have.

And I was -- you know, part of my mandate in the first week on the job was to take care of the mission, but most importantly, to take care of our, my people. And she was one of them and also a friend and a colleague of many years. So I was concerned about her safety, her future.

We had talked with her, of course, about the possibility of taking the assignment at EUCOM, which had come open because of my move here. And then, you know, I was with her in the meeting with the Deputy Secretary when the decision was made in terms of the timing.
Of course she got her award and induction into the Hall of Fame at the NDU, went back, you know, was reassured by human resources then, which took over to find her the appropriate, if she wasn't going to do EUCOM, what assignment might she be interested and what were the possibilities, and reassured about that.

But I still, you know, think it is unfortunate that such a fine professional Foreign Service officer, American, and, most importantly, human being, had to go through that.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q The email relating to [redacted] that Kent wrote, what date was that?

A July 29th, he says with confidence. Is that right?

Q So if I have this correct, Kent wrote: D.C. pushing Kyiv to investigate Bidens. Is that right?

A Well, let's refer to it again.

Q Look, on July 29th, that's relatively remarkable intelligence from a call transcript that hadn't come out for 2 more months.

A Well, the only thing I would say about that is that this story line had been out there going back certainly to March and the Rudy Giuliani stuff that was on live TV saying that, I mean, that was what he was doing, so --

Q But was it in reference to the call?

A That is the notion of the email. I can read it to you again.

The subject line: [Redacted], colon, is it true that, question
mark -- this is George sending that to me and Bill to be aware he had
heard that in the call -- last Thursday D.C. pushed Kyiv on
investigating the Bidens. I said -- that would be George -- I wasn't
in the call, but looking forward, that we were working on particulars
of a visit, dates TBD.

Q Okay. But that's not a generalized Rudy Giuliani is pushing
these things, that is something happened on this call?

A And yeah, I mean, clearly he was -- he was -- I can't speak
for [redacted] or where leaks like that come from, but --

Q But somebody evidently that had firsthand account of what
occurred on the call is talking to [redacted], right?

A I can't say that with any definitiveness because I wasn't
on the call. I don't know how [redacted] gets his information or his
speculations or his trial balloons or where any of that would come.
So I couldn't say.

But, you know, leaks in this town are of that kind, and we've heard
of a number of people that were on the call. I don't -- I was not on
it and didn't see a full readout of it until much later.

Q Did you ever have any discussions with Tim Morrison about
the call?

A I don't recall if Tim and I ever got into details of the call.
I remember clearly and I've shared with you Kurt Volker saying, "Great
call." Sorry, that's Kurt Volker, always so upbeat. That's the
problem with electronic communication.

I just -- I couldn't say if I had any. You know, I talk to Tim
once in a while but not -- anything like that wouldn't be on an open line. And so it's possible that we had something, but I don't recall, although I think I know -- I feel like I know, but it's probably from more recent press reporting that he was on the call.

Q  Okay.

A  I don't know that I knew that.

MR. MEADOWS: So you've got a pretty detailed calendar. So you don't have a record of a call with Tim Morrison shortly after the call?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Let's just check. I'll be quick.

The call was on July 25th, correct? And so I was in Greece that day. I was traveling from Thessaloniki up to the Republic of North Macedonia. I returned the night of Saturday the 27th. I will look quickly.

Tim Morrison? Tim Morrison?

I went to the PCC, of course, on the 31st of July, and Tim Morrison was at that. In fact he was -- I think he chaired it or his deputy was chairing at the beginning and then Tim came in, that I recall. And I did talk to -- I have a note that I had a call with Ambassador Sondland on the 30th.

And it was at the end of that week that Tim Morrison came over. He was quite new at that stage. He had just taken over from Fiona Hill. And we, my team, the seven DAS's, or particularly my Acting Principal Deputy, Michael Murphy, we had invited Tim Morrison over.

And so on the 1st of August, that Thursday, he came and did a series of meetings and briefings with some of our offices just to sort of get
up to speed on European issues because he had moved over from the arms
control directorate, I think, at NSC. And so that was the first time
I met him in person and we had a quick sort of takeout lunch in my office,
he and Michael and I.

And I don't -- we probably touched on Ukraine, but I don't have
specific recollections of that. Because I do remember asking him over
time, you know, any news on the date for the White House meeting?

And then I did see Kurt Volker that day, so August 1st.

BY MR. CASTOR:

Q Who was all at the July 31st PCC meeting?

A It was huge. I mean, there were probably 50 people in that
room, or 40. It was interagency. We were late, and my -- one of my
team, somehow his clearance didn't get passed so they wouldn't let him
into the White House compound.

And so, finally, he said, "All right, you guys go ahead," because
we were already late, George and I, and he handed me the locked bag
with the materials we needed for the PCC, but he didn't hand me the
key.

And so we went to the meeting and literally walked in and it was
a full, full room, I mean very interagency. I know DOD was sitting
right next to me, NSC folks, and there was Treasury and Justice and --

Q DNI?

A Homeland Security, probably DNI, and associated agencies and
elements of that ilk. So it was a big meeting and focusing on
some -- again, the focus was not on the assistance, there was that
separate process, and at that point they were waiting to see if they
could pull together the principal small group. But this was more
focused on some other aspects, military -- or, sorry, commercial
aspects in Ukraine.

Q Did you have any discussions with anybody offline, heading
in or out of that meeting, about that issue?

A Well, we were late, so I didn't. And then we did, at least
coming in and then with Laura Cooper from DOD, who I guess you've heard
from, she had brought up again, she said: I know this isn't about
assistance, but I just want to say is there any -- anybody have any
updates on the assistance because we need to start moving on this
because we have a mandate.

Again, it was DOD's issue. That stuff passes through State, but
it was really vested with them, and we were all still wondering where
that was going to be.

Q And you didn't have any communications with Morrison?

A At that meeting I don't believe there was anything specific,
no.

Q And in this time period did he have any communications with
you about his concerns about the call?

A I don't recall him raising anything. I don't recall knowing
that he was on the call until later.

I mean, again, I look at the number of calls and country -- you
know, we're talking 50 countries and the things that were going on in
that period. But as of right off the bat it was not something I was
aware of.

My focus on this was, okay, the Ukraine problem set is White House meeting and now assistance. We were trying to work this assistance thing and figure out where the holdup is, if it's Mulvaney. We were trying to have that become apparent and get a principals decision on it. The scheduling, as I've already said, was difficult. And then the White House meeting was still TBD.

Q You were originally scheduled to appear here last week and that was delayed until today?

A Yeah, I had agreed to come on Wednesday. And then I got a message saying -- it was through my counsel -- that they had asked if we could delay.

Q And they asked you to delay it to today?

A There were some options. I'm scheduled to leave Tuesday to go to Prague for the Velvet Revolution anniversary and to speak at a CEPA conference. So I had hoped I didn't have to cancel that, which is why when they offered Saturday I --

Q Okay. But Monday would have been a perfectly fine option?

A It would have been difficult to then leave and go because of my having canceled everything last week to prepare and then be here. My Monday is now very full, but --

Q Okay. Fair enough. You were scheduled to give a speech at the Atlantic Council, as I understand it?

A I was scheduled to be on a panel about, if I recall correctly, it was about on the eastern Mediterranean. And having just coming back
from the Secretary's trip to Greece and all of the things we have done
with the new Greek Government -- which is really quite something. The
Secretary signed a new annex to the mutual defense cooperation
agreement with Greece just taking us in a whole new direction. It's
really quite interesting. Eastern Med is a very crucial part of our
AOR, eastern Med and Black Sea.

So we determined -- you know, I get hundreds of these invitations
literally for this panel, that conference, speeches, remarks, Q&A,
press interviews, which I don't do many of, to talk about our policies.

So that was assessed to be a good opportunity. It was ripe, again
just coming back from the Greece trip. But when I thought I was going
to be testifying on or doing this deposition on Wednesday I pulled out
of that, which I think was scheduled for Tuesday, as I recall.

MR. MEADOWS: I want to clear up, Ambassador, I don't know that
when I mentioned the think tank individual, without going back to his
name, certainly a connection with Burisma, I didn't mean to imply that
he worked for Burisma, in spite of wearing a jacket and a hat that said
Burisma. The only known connection that I have is that he works for
the Atlantic Council. And so I just want to make sure that I'm clear
for the record.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. I don't either, to be honest. My
recollection is his focus is on energy issues, which would make sense,
Burisma, the Caspian stuff as well, I would think.

MR. MEADOWS: I just want to make sure I was clear.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.
MR. CASTOR: Any concern that the Atlantic Council gets some funding from Burisma?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't think I knew that. No. I mean -- no. I mean, they get funding from lots and lots of sources. I don't know if that's -- I don't know how much, I don't know that they do. You're telling me that they do, but I don't know.

You know, now that you mention it, I went to an Atlantic Council event in New York during the UNGA week, the end of September, at the end of September, right around the time all this was starting. And that's right, I think among the 20 sponsors, you've been to these things, they had their names, I did notice that. So I take that back, I should know, I did know that -- or at least I inferred because they were listed among the sponsors that they gave some money to the Atlantic Council.

MR. CASTOR: Okay.

I'm good, Mr. Meadows.

I yield back.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, do you want to take a break or do you want to keep moving through?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Let's just keep going. If the water kicks in I'll let you know.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, at any time, no matter who's asking the questions, feel free to say I could use a small break.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: You know, you've had a lot of questions about
Burisma, but it was quite clear very early on from Rudy Giuliani's public comments, not to mention anything he might have said to Ambassador Volker or the Three Amigos in private, it was quite clear from Giuliani's public comments that his interest in Burisma was the Bidens, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have to say yes --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you were just setting up. That's a question.

Yeah, certainly from what I was reading he referred to that a number of times.

THE CHAIRMAN: He referred to the Bidens?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: The Bidens and Burisma, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: So it wasn't a generic interest in all companies in Ukraine or even all energy companies, he was interested in the company that Hunter Biden worked on, served on the board.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Based on the press reports and Giuliani's statements that I saw, that was certainly true. I don't know that that was his exclusive interest but --

THE CHAIRMAN: But that's clearly what he was talking about publicly. And he made no mystery of his interest. Am I right.

MR. REEKER. And as I've stated, testified, that George laid that out as one of these narratives. That was that Giuliani, Biden, Burisma, I think that's how he described it, telling me, you know, gas company, Biden, Hunter, that was Giuliani's thing, yeah.
THE CHAIRMAN: And when you came back and took over this portfolio and all this was happening with Ambassador Yovanovitch, your shop made sure that you were aware of sort of what was going on in the press and what the issues were so you could be brought up to date.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: We were trying to figure out where this was coming from. Obviously, I was interested myself, that it started with, hey, we're getting these inquiries about this. And then we found the story in The Hill. In fact, I think they said we've gotten questions from The Hill who were writing a story that, and that starts generating the process, and then it was this deluge.

And so both for our interest in the Bureau to try to get a handle on it, but also to feed upwards certainly to my chain of command of Under Secretary Hill and Counselor Brechbuhl, the sort of what and why now, they were trying to feed that. That's why I had so many, so many emails of press clips from both Ukrainian and various American --

THE CHAIRMAN: Right. And those, that background, brought to your attention Giuliani's interest in the Bidens and Burisma.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: To the degree that George mentioned there were four strands, he was doing it. This was certainly not an enormous focus of mine because I had, you know, 50 countries to deal with and brand new to a job and then trying to deal specifically with Masha.

THE CHAIRMAN: And to those four strands, one was Bidens and Burisma. The other -- another was 2016, the alleged Ukraine involvement in 2016, right?

THE CHAIRMAN: And then, you know, you've read the call record, that two issues the President brings up with President Zelensky are the Bidens and 2016, slash, CrowdStrike, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: CrowdStrike? I'm sorry, that's not --

THE CHAIRMAN: 2016, the President mentions the word CrowdStrike. That's -- CrowdStrike is part of the conspiracy theory about 2016, that the server's in Ukraine or the hack originated from Ukraine --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay. I didn't remember the specific reference, but, yeah, yes, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: But you are aware the call, the President actually does refer to Burisma, he refers to the Bidens, You're aware, you've read the call record.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I have looked at it some time ago when it first came out. I don't have it with me. But yes. Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, you've said some very positive things about Ambassador Volker. He is a thorough diplomat, would you say, he does his homework.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. My experience.

THE CHAIRMAN: Develops a deep understanding of the subject matter.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so if he had been given responsibility of one of the Three Amigos for Ukraine policy, he would dig into Ukraine. And he already had responsibility in Ukraine, correct.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: He had been the Special Representative
for -- I don't remember when he was appointed, long before my time,
but he had been doing this for some time, yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so in particular if he was charged with or took
on responsibility of interacting with Giuliani he would have
familiarized himself with the issues Giuliani had been raising publicly
and the -- and their relationship to U.S.-Ukraine relations.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't want to go too far because we didn't
have those conversations, so I don't know how much he delved into it.
He did mention to me that was going to try to talk to Rudy and help
him understand, you know, what we were trying to do now with Zelensky.

THE CHAIRMAN: In the same way you were being thorough, though,
making sure you understood the background, you would have expected that
he'd be doing the same, right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. I mean, I think Kurt is thorough. I
just can't testify to any specifics on that because we didn't talk about
it.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now, you were asked -- you had responsibility for
about 50 countries.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is that right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah.

THE CHAIRMAN: And at this time Ambassador Volker had
responsibility for one.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, he's the unpaid special government
employee --

THE CHAIRMAN: I don't mean it as a rap, I'm just saying so he had a particular focus on Ukraine.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: I want to ask you about the article, and I don't have it with me, that came out today apparently about your expected testimony.

You voiced support for a statement coming out from the highest levels of the State Department supporting Ambassador Yovanovitch, did you not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did on a couple of occasions. In that process we tried to push for a stronger statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: And Ambassador Kent was very strongly in favor of a statement coming from the top of support for Yovanovitch. Is that right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: And Ambassador McKinley felt even more strongly about it. Indeed, that ended up becoming -- the failure to produce that statement ended up becoming part of the reason why he would resign.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Later.

THE CHAIRMAN: Later.

MR. REEKER. Yeah, in September. I believe Ambassador McKinley became focused on this when -- at the time that the transcript, or what word do we use to describe, the telephone call --

THE CHAIRMAN: The call record.
AMBASSADOR REEKER: The call record was released and had these really unpleasant statements about Masha.

THE CHAIRMAN: And so there was a fairly uniform view that it would be necessary, appropriate, important, helpful to have a statement from the top of the State Department expressing support for this superb diplomat, Ambassador Yovanovitch.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: And yet the word you got back was no, correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Now --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No additional statement, from the statement we had put out.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, yeah. Of course the request was not for what you had already put out in terms of press guidance, it was a statement on its own merits, standing on its own two feet, of support for the Ambassador, right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. We described in the draft, I think, of what they sent up were the ideas, and that came back as a no from the Under Secretary.

THE CHAIRMAN: That came back as a no from the Under Secretary.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: From the Under Secretary's office.

THE CHAIRMAN: And that was Under Secretary Hale.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

THE CHAIRMAN: Was Hale supportive of issuing a statement.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know. I just got back the answer.
No, he had, as I had mentioned in earlier testimony, he had
suggested that Masha release her statement. In fact, I think you asked
me about that, sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: But he never expressed to you opposition to
issuing a statement, did he.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't -- I mean, what I got back from his
office was the no. The process, it did not -- P says no statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: Are you aware of whether the Under Secretary
actually submitted his own request or supported the request for the
statement.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not know what he did.

THE CHAIRMAN: The decision to turn down the statement, that
wouldn't be made by Ulrich Brechbuhl on his own, would it.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It may have been. I don't know.

THE CHAIRMAN: Does the -- what's the title of his position?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ulrich.

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Counselor.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would the Counselor make a decision at odds with
the uniform view of top State Department officials without consulting
the Secretary of State.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just don't know. You'd have to ask him.

I really couldn't tell you. He's my superior and I --

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you have any reason to believe that the decision
not to issue the statement ultimately came from anyone other than the
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I can't speculate on that. All I know is that the answer came back from the Under Secretary that there would be no statement.

THE CHAIRMAN: I presume that if the Secretary wanted a statement one would have been sent out. Is that fair to say.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: If the Secretary wants something, he can take that initiative, yes.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Malinowski.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Thank you.

Well, just picking up on that, the Under Secretary for Political Affairs is the third ranking official in the State Department, correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

MR. MALINOWSKI. So the second ranking would be D, the Deputy Secretary, and then the Secretary of State. All three the outrank the Counselor.

What is the Counselor's role in the State Department traditionally? I'm not talking about a particular individual, but traditionally what is that job?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: In some administrations there has been no Counselor. Other times the Counselor has had a very prominent role. I believe Counselor Brechbuhl is -- I mean, he is one of the people that I deal with certainly on all personnel messages -- personnel matters -- at the level that we're talking about, how to staff embassies, who to put forward as potential nominees.
MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. But he doesn't outrank the Under Secretary for Political Affairs in any formal sense.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that to be a fact. I don't.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, you know the -- you've been in the Foreign Service for --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's up to the Secretary, sir. I don't --

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. But his authority, but the Counselor's authority derives from the Secretary, in other words.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct.

MR. MALINOWSKI: In any administration.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: He is not a confirmed position.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Exactly. So if an Under Secretary of State were to get word from the Counselor that there should be no statement and it is the consensus view of everybody working on this issue in the Department that there should be a statement, it would seem to me that the Counselor's view or his instructions would only be definitive if everyone assumed that he was representing the Secretary of State or perhaps -- is there an alternative, the White House, Mr. Mulvaney's office?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Again, I don't know that that was determined -- I don't know anything more than what I have told you to the best of my ability.

On my first week in this office, when we proposed a statement that would include certain elements that we proposed, after waiting for feedback we got back an answer from the Under Secretary, my boss, saying
his office said no statement.

MR. MALINOWSKI. Well, but he'd consulted with Brechbuhl, and the answer was no statement.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't know that.

MR. MALINOWSKI: That's what you testified before, I believe.

MR. REEKER. No, I said he wrote that I had been trying to consult with Brechbuhl, but it was a separate chain from the no statement thing.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And are you aware of any communications between the State Department and the White House on this question, the Chief of Staff's office or any -- or the NSC --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I am not.

MR. MALINOWSKI: -- with regard to whether a statement should be issued?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, sir. I know we got a question from -- toward the end of that week, around the 30th, there was a question from the NSC, I think from Fiona Hill herself perhaps, saying: Is there a statement about Masha? Is there a statement of support? And I did not personally -- I wasn't personally involved in the exchange, but I think they --

MR. MALINOWSKI: So that suggests that the NSC would have been supportive of a statement.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just can't draw that conclusion. All I know was --

MR. MALINOWSKI. Did you clear a draft statement with the NSC when it was going up the chain?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not involved in that kind of -- sorry.
I used to be, but not anymore.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Let me -- so shifting subjects a little bit, I
want told a little bit of Presidential phone calls 101 with you.
When the President of the United States speaks on the phone to
a foreign leader, that foreign leader is on the call, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Is this a trick question?

MR. MALINOWSKI: It's a simple question. It's not a trick
question.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, that would be my assumption, or we have
to assume it's the foreign leader on the other end of the line.

MR. MALINOWSKI: That's true, sometimes it's a Russian comedian.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It's a radio station in Kyiv, yeah.

MR. MALINOWSKI: There we go.
And don't we also assume that that foreign leader has staff, maybe
their foreign minister, maybe their chief of staff, a secretary, they
have a team that may be listening in on the phone call too? We may
not know it, but we have to assume that --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think that's usually a fair --

MR. MALINOWSKI: Just as we have.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. No, I think that's usually a fair
assumption. I mean, I would -- I often talk to in the Balkans prime
ministers on my cell phone, but for the President, a formal call, I
think that that would be the assumption, yes.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And it would be safe to assume that in that
foreign government's bureaucracy they produce a summary or a
transcript, that they have their own way of reporting to relevant people
in their administration what was said on that phone call, just as we
do in ours?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's a fair assumption.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And this is one reason why we tend to be careful
what we say on these calls, and they're not generally classified at
the highest levels because we have no way of controlling what -- how
the details of that call are disseminated on the other side.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Or who else is listening in.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Exactly. That was my next question. And in
Ukraine one would have to presume there is another great power that
might conceivably learn what happens on a conversation like that.

And isn't this one reason why most administrations --

THE CHAIRMAN: Do you want to have him respond to that.

MR. MALINOWSKI: I'm sorry.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I assume that any call I make on an
unsecure phone is being listened to by somebody, including in this town.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And in Ukraine, Russia has very
aggressive intelligence-gathering operations, we assume. We don't
know necessarily know in every case.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is a presumption that one would make,
yes.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And this is also one reason why most
administrations the contents of a Presidential phone call with a
foreign leader are shared with our Ambassador to that country, with
the Assistant Secretary, with people who commonly deal with officials
from that country. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That has been my experience in the past.
That has not been my experience in this current administration.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Correct. But it is sort of logical, because you
may be dealing with your counterpart in the Ukrainian Government, our
Ambassador may be dealing with people, and it sort of puts you all in
a difficult position when the folks you are talking to know what our
President said but you don't.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, I think that's a fair characterization
of diplomacy.

MR. MALINOWSKI: All that is fairly safe to assume. Is it also
reasonable -- and, of course, we don't know and you don't know -- but
is it reasonable to assume that if the President of Ukraine heard
something in a phone conversation with the U.S. President that
concerned him about perhaps U.S. policy veering in a different
direction from where it had been, that this news would spread within
the Ukrainian bureaucracy and that somebody might reach out to a
friendly American contact, perhaps a former U.S. Ambassador, to say:
What's going on here? It's not inconceivable, right?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: It is not inconceivable.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. And it could happen very quickly.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: These days everything happens very quickly.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Exactly. So Mr. Herbst might very -- and,
again, we don't know and I'm not asking you to suggest you know -- but it's conceivable that he might have learned about this from his many Ukrainian -- one of his many Ukrainian contacts?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That is perfectly conceivable, yes.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. And then shifting again, foreign assistance getting cut happens --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Frozen.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Frozen, suspended, as has been mentioned before, it happens all the time. We suspend, hold, cut, redirect assistance to foreign countries for multiple reasons, sometimes for purposes of conditionality, sometimes because, you know, our priorities change.

And you testified that you had no idea and that the team working on Ukraine had no idea why the aid was held. You knew it had been held, but you didn't know why. You tried to find out, you didn't know.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right, the exact, at least what was filtering up to me from the assistance coordinator, from George and the Ukraine desk -- you know, I was in and out. As I've said, I travel about 50 percent of the time. But I was back and we were getting updates -- was, there's still no movement on that. There was definitely a feeling that this was -- this was Mr. Mulvaney who --

MR. MALINOWSKI: Right, it was coming from there.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: -- who affected this, that's right.

MR. MALINOWSKI: But you didn't know why.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: But we did not know for sure.
MR. MALINOWSKI: Can you think of any, in your long Foreign
Service career, can you think of any instances you were involved with
when aid to an important country, a country you were working on, was
cut or suspended or held or whatever, and nobody working on that country
knew why? Is that regular?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think it's fair to say that's not regular.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Right.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd have to go back. I mean, it's possible
that there were cases. I'm just trying to think of my experience,
particularly in the Balkans. Occasionally Congress will put a freeze
on something.

MR. MALINOWSKI: But you know why when we put a freeze.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not always, but, you know, usually.

MR. MALINOWSKI: There used to be secret holds, I guess.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Right. Right.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And then finally, most of the -- many of the
people we've been talking about reported to or through you. Ambassador
Sondland is one of your ambassadors, correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well --

MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean formally speaking.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, in the European Bureau of 50
countries, 49 missions, so 49 chiefs of mission, I don't want to give
you the exact percentage but it's extremely high, are noncareer or what
we refer to as political appointees.

Nominally, chiefs of mission, you know, they report -- they are
the personal representatives of the President and the Secretary of State, so they report to the Secretary. Many of these guys, the noncareer people, literally do that, you know, in terms of they pick up the phone and they talk to them.

We have a great team. I knew a number of them from my EUCOM experience, which I think may have been one of the reasons they brought me in. So they're great. Bringing in noncareer people brings a lot of strengths, a lot of interests. We've got, you know, financiers, we've got sports teams owners, and we've got former generals and admirals. We've got just a very broad range of people.

To say that they report to me at the political level is not the same as the career officers who -- for whom I write their evaluation.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Right. But the formal reporting chain is not dependent on whether someone is a political appointee or a career person.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: In the case of some --

MR. MALINOWSKI: I'm not talking about informal relationships, how things really work --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I realize, Congressman, you're alluding to particularly Ambassador Sondland. I never have felt that Ambassador Sondland reports to me.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. But Ambassador Taylor, Ambassador Yovanovitch would have been in the chain.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Ambassador Taylor, of course, is not a chief of mission, he's a charge d'affaires at this point. But yes.
MR. MALINOWSKI: I mean, I wasn't so much getting at the Sondland versus Yovanovitch distinction.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And I know you still have "Acting" in front of your name, but you are playing the role of the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Correct, which is why I was so focused on the mission, and particularly the Ambassador in Masha's case.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And part of this -- I mean, you are the chief advisor to the Secretary of State on policy towards all these countries, are you not?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, that would be the Under Secretary for Political Affairs, as well as the special representatives for a variety of countries. So for Ukraine I would say the chief advisor was Kurt Volker.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, this is more of a comment than a question, Ambassador, but I have known every person to occupy this job since Dick Holbrooke.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: So have I.

MR. MALINOWSKI: And I have never heard anybody in this job say what you have said to us today, that I am not in charge of a country in my area of operation.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'd like you to clarify. I don't know where I've said -- I am not in charge of what?

MR. MALINOWSKI: Of Ukraine policy. It's an important country
in the EUR.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: A decision, as I've explained to you, was taken and made clear to me that Ukraine policy was being implemented and led by Ambassador Volker, Ambassador Sondland, and to an extent the Secretary of Energy, with the complete support of the President and the Secretary.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, that's absolutely clear. I just -- again, this is more of a comment than a question. It's a stunning and very important fact.

Who's in charge of Ukraine policy now? The Three Amigos --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ultimately the Secretary.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Well, I understand, but this arrangement is no more. Is that --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, correct. As I testified earlier, you may have been out of the room and forgive me if you weren't, we have discussed that. I've looked for guidance on how do we handle this.

Now, obviously, George Kent continues to play a very -- the key role, as any of the seven DAS's do, where without Kurt we have to look at who will take on certain roles.

Kurt was involved in some of the meetings with international, European counterparts, and for now we've said it's between the Under Secretary, myself as Acting Assistant Secretary, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary and the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary as needed, and there is our Deputy Assistant Secretary for Russia, depending on the specific need, topic, level of a meeting, or an
engagement.

That's what we'll do pending whether there is a new Special Representative for Ukraine brought on board or whether we'll just manage the portfolio with existing personnel.

MR. MALINOWSKI: So you're in a kind of holding pattern, you don't really know right now.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: We're just moving forward, you know. Obviously, the Ambassador, or the Charge d'Affaires in the case of Ambassador Taylor who has returned to Kyiv, is also crucial on the ground.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Does he have your full confidence?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Ambassador Taylor? Yes.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Does he have the Secretary's full confidence.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You'd have to ask the Secretary.

MR. MALINOWSKI: Okay. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Of your 50 countries that you oversee, is this the only one where there was this irregular arrangement for implementing U.S. policy?

A I just want to make sure that's correct. I mean, Ambassador Sondland gets involved in a number of other places, but to a less extent. There was not the unique group that was taking charge there. I'm just trying to do a full thing.

The Secretary did recently, at my recommendation, after some
discussion appoint a Special Representative for the western Balkans, who is also the DAS, Matthew Palmer, someone I've worked with on Balkans issues for years, if not decades. And so he has a particular role, still reporting to me, but it's not at all the same. I would say that Ukraine is the only one, yeah.

Q And are there any other countries within your portfolio where the President himself has directed who should handle policy for that country?

A I couldn't say specifically in terms of, you know, exactly what the President may have said in terms of selecting ambassadors and others who report to him. But in terms of the broader policies they know, I mean, I take that direction from the Under Secretary to the Secretary.

Q That's the normal channel?

A Yes.

Q The fact that the President directed Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, and Secretary Perry to be involved in Ukraine is an irregular channel, an irregular path in U.S. diplomacy, correct?

A I wouldn't describe it as regular. The President himself recently announced, in addition to our Special Representative for western Balkans, he announced that the Ambassador to Germany would also be the Special Presidential Envoy for Kosovo-Serbia Peace Negotiations. There's an example, I suppose.
[6:03 p.m.]

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q I mean, but that's an official title. Ambassador Volker was in his role when Ambassador Yovanovitch was there and this arrangement did not exist.

A How do you mean?

Q He was in his role.

A Right.

Q And you didn't say that the President directed Ambassador Yovanovitch and Ambassador Volker to handle Ukraine policy, right?

A Volker was -- as far as I recall, was brought in this role under the Tillerson -- when Secretary Tillerson was still -- still there.

Q I understand that. But my point is that these special envoys are different than the arrangement we're talking about here today. And that's the question for you. Are the special envoys that you are trying to equate with the situation --

A I'm not -- you asked me broad questions, I'm just trying to answer them. You asked am I aware are of any situation, so I'm just trying to do my best to give you the broad array among these 50 countries. But no, this was clearly, as I've now said numerous times in this deposition, this was irregular; that was the word that was used. It struck me as irregular long before I got here that the Ambassador to the EU was involved in this. If that was the choice of President and the Secretary, then obviously, that was their choice, and Gordon
comes with a set of skills.

Q You've also discussed a lot today, DAS Kent, who you would, I think, agree, wouldn't you, that he's certainly a Ukraine expert?
A Yes.

Q And how many countries does he oversee?
A He oversees six, three in the Office of Eastern European Affairs, which is Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, and then what is known as CARC, the Caucasus and Regional Conflict. So Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Minsk process, which is under OSCE which deals with the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.

Q And is it accurate to say that he has a particular expertise among those countries that he covers in Ukraine, given his experience there?
A Yes. He speaks the language. He was the Deputy Chief of Mission until -- well, my understanding is, I couldn't tell you exactly when he came back, but we was brought back by Assistant Secretary Wess Mitchell.

Q I know. I was just asking, does he have particular expertise in Ukraine?
A Yes, absolutely. Which is why I rely on him and feel so fully confident, you know. When you're a manager and an executive, you build a team that you can rely on that handles these things.

Q Right.
A So George has been a critical part of that.

Q And in particular, given that you cover 50 countries, you
rely on him, especially heavily for Ukraine matters, right, because of his expertise?

A Right. And his team, he's got a great team of office directors, deputies, desk officers.

Q And so what you've described here today is essentially that the detailed work of State Department related to Ukraine, primarily ran through George Kent. And whatever else was going on, in terms of the Presidential directive and Rudy Giuliani was run through Ambassador Sondland and Volker?

A Yeah, I think that's a fair characterization. Kurt Volker's original title was Special Representative for Ukraine negotiations, which is why he engaged with his Russian counterpart up until the last meeting they had, which was in January of 2018, to try to move forward. And why he was the point person with our European colleagues and allies in Berlin and Paris through the so-called Normandy process and the Minsk agreements that were supposed to be implemented but never have been by Russia.

And that role of his expanded. He took on much more engagement in terms of messaging in the press. He's very effective with it. He became a point person in contact on the broader policy. And then, of course, with the election, as I've described already, and the team that was assembled, the delegation to attend the Zelensky inauguration, then emerged this -- this triumvirate, I guess. Is that the right word?

Q DAS Kent is a meticulous employee, correct?

A I would use that word, I think. He's extremely smart,
extremely collegial, knows the regions, both Ukraine, and the Eastern Europe, and the Caucasus extremely well.

Q Did you ever come across any memos to file that he wrote related to Ukraine over the past 6 months?

A Oh, I would have to go back and see. You know, he sent a lot of email in those early days, particularly -- I was so new to it, and as I've said, trying to understand where was this coming from, what was this about.

Q But do any jump out at you, as you sit here, in terms of recalling any specific memos to file and concerns that he had?

A No.

Q You don't recall a memo to file on or about August 16th that he wrote related to Ambassadors Sondland and Volker, and any pressure to investigate Ukraine?

A I don't believe so, no. August 16th.

Q And that memo to file is not in your 4 inch binder there?

A No. I would not think so. And I would imagine a memo to file sounds to me like something classified, but I don't know, and this is obviously not.

Q Well, we were informed that it was not classified. In fact, there was another memo to file that he wrote on or about September 15th. Does that one ring a bell related to a meeting that he had in Ukraine with Ambassador Taylor and a Ukrainian official?

A Not ringing a bell right away. It is the kind of thing I would have to go and look back and check.
Q How about one more recently in early October, related specifically to the subpoena that the Department received from the committees in this investigation. Were you familiar with that one?

A I -- when the subpoena came -- I mean, George was sort of the first one in this process, and I was traveling with the Secretary in Italy, and the Balkans, and Greece. And I heard from the Principal Deputy, who of course was acting, Ambassador Cormack, that there had been some, you know, fairly acrimonious meetings, and he had laid out -- I'm just -- I don't recall specifically the format or what I saw or if this was relayed to me, what happened in that experience, which was, you know, which he was laying out in not a positive experience.

Q Did you have any correspondence with Ambassador McKinley after this investigation came to light and before he resigned?

A He sent me an email in New York. I'm pretty sure it's not in here, on the Saturday -- let's refer to the trusted -- ah. Thank you. Thank you. I have counsel, it is in here. Okay. And all that printing.

So Saturday, September 28th. And he did send an email saying, the Department should issue a strong statement of support for her professionalism and courage -- the subject line is "Masha Yovanovitch." This is after the transcript of the telephone call, the President's call -- for professionalism and courage, preferably today. Articles are proliferating and we should comment, not least because it is the right thing to do, and it is critical to send a message to
our colleagues that we support our people.

I responded to him at 11:27 a.m. saying, I fully agree. EUR, that
would be the European Bureau, had proposed statements back in April,
May, when certain media were full throttle. And I said, you may want
to include Carol Perez in personnel and human resources in the
discussion. And I think I don't have the further, but I recall that
he then sent it, including Carol and she said, I agree too, and
that's -- that was my word from him.

Q Did you have any further conversations with anyone superior
to you about such a statement?

A I received a phone call from Under Secretary Hale, who
said -- because I was at lunch -- I left lunch, a working lunch, and
left that to take a call in the operations center. And he said, you
know, this email that -- I have to paraphrase because I don't remember
effectively, but it was essentially, I don't think this is going to go
anywhere. And I said, Well -- I responded that I think we should issue
a statement.

Q Did he explain why he didn't think it was going to go
anywhere?

A I don't recall him saying anything beyond that. The
spokesperson was also on this, so, when Ambassador McKinley sent the
email he included David Hale and both spokesperson Ortagus on that end.
I'm not sure I ever saw any response, further response.

Q Did he -- did Under Secretary Hale say that he had spoken
to anyone superior to him before reaching the conclusion that he didn't
think it was going happen?

A At that stage, I don't believe so, because I think it was really right after that.

Q Do you -- was it your impression that Under Secretary Hale himself objected to the idea of a statement in support of Ambassador Yovanovitch?

A That I couldn't characterize.

Q Would that be consistent with the David Hale that you know?

A Well, he had -- he had, you know, said earlier in the earlier process back in March that we've already discussed at length, he'd said his office had said no statement.

Q Right. But there was also an email you recall with Ulrich Breckbuhl where they mentioned two things: A Yovanovitch self-defense statement herself --

A Uh-huh.

Q -- and a statement from the Department. Do you recall that email where there was a discussion of those two ideas that were being fed up the chain?

A I think I cited that.

Q You did.

A Let me find it again, just to try to refresh exactly. Let's see, this would have been around 31, 33.

Q Maybe while your lawyer looks, I can move on to something else. You had -- let me ask you this: Do you recall or do you know whether in your binder, other than the documents we discussed, you have
any additional relevant documents from George Kent, or any SOCs that
came out of the interagency meetings? Is there anything else in there
that's particularly relevant?
A No, I wouldn't have SOCs. I don't believe I have anything
related to that. I may on other systems, but I don't.
Q And do you recall seeing, in your review of your emails,
anything else such as that July 29th email that references the President
asking Ukraine to conduct an investigation of the Bidens? Do you have
anything else that relates to the Biden investigation, or to Rudy
Giuliani?
A There's certainly lots of press things that were being
forwarded in this. As everyone is aware, this was circulating very
widely as, one might say, speculation or this was one of those
narratives. And, you know, as we've discussed, Mr. Giuliani was saying
this quite openly.
Q Were -- are there any emails where you and any of your
superiors were discussing Mr. Giuliani or these investigations that
he was advocating?
A I think only the ones that I forwarded up saying, here are
the -- here's the, sort of, a sampling of the press or what is driving
this in the early narrative the very early days in the first couple
of weeks.
Q But nothing after, let's say, May 28th in that meeting with
Secretary Pompeo that you recall from your review of your documents?
A No, just -- I don't think there were any further emails.
Q But suffice it to say that you printed out this select group of emails to prepare for your testimony today?

A I was trying to grasp. You know, I went to -- I -- these came from e-files that I tried to save. So I had one that said "Masha." And this Masha thing, which was, again, literally created my second day or something because all this was coming out. I was very concerned. I was just trying to understand, first of all, where was this going on, not only for my own -- where was this coming from, and what really was going on here, what was driving this, but also, focus on how do we take care of her.

Q But would you agree that all these emails were responsive to the subpoena that was sent by the committees to the State Department?

A I could assume that. I don't know the response to that. I think it is done automatically, so I don't know what they pulled out, but --

Q Last question before we go back to the minority on your documents. In your review of your WhatsApp messages, are there any other WhatsApp messages between you and Ambassador Volker, you and Ambassador Taylor? I think you said who else, Masha?

A Masha.

Q Ambassador Sondland? And Masha?

A I don't have WhatsApp with Gordon.

Q Ambassador Sondland and who the fourth? There was a fourth?

A Taylor, Volker, Masha and Kent, George.

Q Okay.
A And George was very brief. It was just a period when -- I can't remember where he was traveling that it was difficult to --

Q Are there any others that reference the Biden-Burisma investigation, or Rudy Giuliani, or 2016 election?

A I think we covered it when we went over the first one. Masha's didn't. It was more the first part of my Masha exchanges on WhatsApp was about whether she was interested in the position at EUCOM, which was another, sort of, task I had before all this hit, and then it was the exchange.

Q Right. I understand there are other topics. I'm asking specifically if there are any other references to these investigations, Biden, Burisma, Giuliani, 2016?

A I mentioned to you, Bill Taylor's concerns when he said, I'm still struggling with the decision whether to go. I believe the chairman brought up Giuliani, Biden; this was Bill referring to the Giuliani-Biden issue, will likely persist for the next year. And I don't know -- I'm not sure the Secretary can give me any reassurance on this issue. And of course, then we did have the meeting and he did feel reassured. And then Bill -- they headed off and that was the end of WhatsApp with Bill.

Q Well, why don't we do this, our time is up. If maybe -- I believe your counsel may have found that other email that we were asking about.

A I find one mention of Giuliani, and we can find this email, this is in an exchange with George, who is on the 27th of May, he had
talked to Masha. He was relaying that to me. She had two asks and suggestions regarding press guidance on the latest media about her. She had already come back by this point. She -- she said if possible, we -- she wants -- wanted us to say we stand up for the embassy. She wanted us to stand up for the embassy, because Giuliani did not just name her and me, that would be George, but denigrated the whole embassy.

And so that's the only other reference to Giuliani because he did. He attacked, you know, quite -- to me, I found it personally insulting and outrageous. Group of, you know, an incredibly strong embassy that's well-known for having a great team that does amazing reporting, whether it is essentially partially a war zone, whether it is a country undergoing great change during elections, difficulty, and then get swamped with all of this. And yet this gentleman who is on the -- you know, all over the media denigrating our embassies, which is -- and our Foreign Service officers. And you know, that's not the only place that that happens.

MR. GOLDMAN: I yield to the minority.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Oh, did you want to -- sorry, just to come back, so I can be complete. The email that we were looking for was the one that Hale sent on March 28th to myself copying George saying, I've tried several times to get guidance from Ulrich, to no avail. I suggest Phil call to see if we can okay, A, for use of social media self-defense, and B, release of a Department statement.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q  Who was that from, sorry?
A That was from David Hale to me and George Kent.
Q Suggesting that you call Mr. Brechbuhl?
A He had tried several times to get guidance. I suggest Phil call to see if we can, what I just read you. And I'd -- I responded that I inquired to C's availability. That was the 28th. And then, of course, later that week, we got the message from his office saying "no statement."
MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you.
MR. MEADOWS: Mr. Chairman, may I inquire about how much more time do you have? That may dictate what we do on our side. Are you all done?
MR. GOLDMAN: We are -- I just have a couple of follow-up questions.
MR. MEADOWS: Is that a congressional couple?
MR. GOLDMAN: I think we are 5 or 10 --
MR. MEADOWS: -- or is that a Goldman couple?
THE CHAIRMAN: I don't think we'll go through whole another round, I hope.
MR. MEADOWS: So Mr. Ambassador, I want to kind of close out. I think we're going to just keep our questions very limited. I don't want to -- maybe clarify a couple of things. First, thank you for your service, for your continued service. And certainly, as you're going through the process as acting, awaiting for confirmation --
AMBASSADOR REEKER: Excuse me, sir, just to clarify, I have never been nominated to the position.
MR. MEADOWS: Okay. So you're just in the acting role. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. Technically I was informed that the -- he's leaving for -- that the Vacancies Act -- after all that -- according to the Vacancies Act, I have used up the time available or the time where I'm allowed to be formally known as the Acting Assistant Secretary.

MR. MEADOWS: So you've used up over 270 --

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. That sounds right. Time flies when you're having fun -- and so I was informed by the Legal Advisor's Office, I think, or the human -- or the personnel people that, technically, I should be referred to as the senior bureau official. And I --

MR. MEADOWS: Well, Ambassador Senior Bureau Official.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I've been called an SOB but never an SBO.

MR. MEADOWS: I won't refer to you in that way.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just want that on the record.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. I'm not normally speechless, but you got me. So let me go back to two or three different things. Your role right now, the way that you view it overseeing the 50 different countries and going forward, you feel like you have fairly clear direction in terms of where you need to be going? And I'll let you answer that first.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, sir. I mean, I came -- you know, as I've testified, this was not something I expected nor aspired to. But
as I said, my wife and I discussed when the Secretary of State asks you to do something and you're a Foreign Service officer, you don't say no. And my commander, boss at European Command, General Scaparotti, understood that, fully supported the decision. And so my understanding was I was coming back to provide leadership in the Bureau to take care of the people, to oversee the seven --

Mr. Meadows: Right.

Ambassador Reeker: Or I would say eight DAS's continuity of the policies that had been established, the strategies that had been put into place. And not just leadership of the Bureau but engagement, and engagement being a key word the Secretary said. And I mention it often publicly when I said so, what do you want me to do? Engagement is key that the Secretary said, even when we differ; if you criticize without engagement, that leads to estrangement, and that's not what we want, so that's partially why I spent a lot of time on the road.

Mr. Meadows: And you said about 50 percent of your time on the road.

Ambassador Reeker: It has been 50/50.

Mr. Meadows: You continue to travel and do that, continue to travel with Secretary Pompeo from time to time?

Ambassador Reeker: When he goes to European destinations, generally I do, not every single time, but usually I do. And then, I often will represent him at certain things where he just can't be every place that ministerials or --

Mr. Meadows: So would you say that you still have the confidence
of Secretary Pompeo?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I believe so, as of yesterday.

MR. MEADOWS: Well, since you've been here today. I think that probably bodes well.

So were you ever informed by any Ukrainian official about a delay in the foreign aid?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. I just haven't had, you know, other than sort of meeting President Zelensky.

MR. MEADOWS: It's fine. I didn't think so.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not the channel of communication.

MR. MEADOWS: My colleague opposite earlier was talking about a readout of the phone call. Are you aware that the Ukrainians provided a readout of the phone call between President Zelensky and President Trump that was published? Did you get a copy of that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm -- I'm not sure that I was aware of that or that I did. What I am familiar with is what was released by the White House.

MR. MEADOWS: Right. But the Ukrainians, we're aware in deposition from previous witnesses that it was actually -- I believe it came from Mr. Volker -- a readout from Ukrainians, because Mr. Volker and Mr. Sondland both said that the Ukrainians felt good about the call. Did they convey that to you?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, as I think I've testified, Kurt did send me a WhatsApp message and saying, Great call with POTUS.

MR. MEADOWS: So Mr. Volker, did he talk about -- if he says,
great call, do you believe that that was meant to be a great call from
President Trump's standpoint, or from President Zelensky's standpoint,
or both?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, I -- I couldn't say. I really
couldn't. I just remember being that -- saying something to the group,
I said, Oh, I heard from Kurt, it was a great call --

MR. MEADOWS: So Ambassador Volker, Special Envoy to the Ukraine,
ever said that he had any concerns about the phone call. Is that
correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: To me directly? No. You know, he had broad
concerns about moving forward, getting that White House meeting.

MR. MEADOWS: The meeting.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, moving the process forward,
getting the President to understand. He was very clear that when they
briefed the President after the inauguration on the 23rd of May, he
said, I just kept going back to the positive, but Mr. President, we
have opportunities to work with this new President of Ukraine and his
team.

MR. MEADOWS: So would you say that Ambassador Volker, Ambassador
Sondland, Secretary Perry, and Senator Ron Johnson all were talking
about how that this can be a new day for Ukraine in terms of a new
government, kind of a reset of the corrupt practices of the past?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, I think that's a hope. And the readout
from the meeting that I got was that the delegation will work with
Ukrainian Government in context of push for reform and to flag the
President's concerns about corruption, poor investment climate, and oligarchic control of the economy. And ensure that Zelensky comes prepared to demonstrate his commitment to reform and improving U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relationship.

MR. MEADOWS: Yeah. So have you heard since the aid has been released, and -- have you heard about concerns of possible oligarch influence within the new Zelensky administration?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: There are reports of those kinds of things where you would imagine questions ---

MR. MEADOWS: Specifically, people that are closely aligned with oligarch, they were closely aligned with Zelensky, now getting positions in the new government. I think some of your other colleagues have testified to that. Have you heard any of that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah. There was always the question about Mr. -- it wasn't so late I would remember, Kola --

MR. CASTOR: Kolomoisky.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Kolomoisky, the exiled oligarch, who he was said to be close with, but there is still - my understanding is that there's still questions about what role and what influence he has.

MR. MEADOWS: And so let me close with this: Generally speaking, you're -- the aid that was released on September the 11th and 12th of 2019, actually had a higher proportion of that money going towards defensive weapons and military options, versus previous appropriations and administrations. Is that correct?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I know that the fiscal 2019 amount
for Ukraine State USAID, and that includes of course State stuff that's been passed to DOD for various military programs was $445.7 million. That's a plus-up of over $30 million from fiscal 2018. The Javelins, of course, was something that was new and just under this administration that had not been, if I'm recalling correctly, but it is not something that I was tracking at all.

MR. MEADOWS: That's correct, as a defensive weapon?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah.

MR. MEADOWS: And so in that increase, would you say that proper U.S.-Ukraine policy would be to continue with additional defensive weapons support going forward?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I mean, I would leave that specific judgment and recommendation to the experts in that. And my -- many of them, former colleagues at EUCOM, or at DOD in our political military bureau at State, where most of that -- I wouldn't want to -- I think that's an important component. But I would defer and get an expert position on that before I would want -- but I do believe that that is an important component of what we're doing to help Ukraine. And, of course, the Ukrainians are also buying and paying for weapon systems.

MR. MEADOWS: I yield back.

Mr. Chairman, for the record, I just want to say thank you for hearing me out you on some of my concerns today.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, I -- and I thank you. I look forward to working with you through the rest of the duration here.

Ambassador -- no, feel free to consult with counsel at any time.
I hope this will be the lightning round to finish off here. So you may know nothing about the topics I'm going to ask you about, if you don't, just say so and we can move on.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Okay.

THE CHAIRMAN: If you do, if you can be succinct, we will get to it quicker. During the time when Secretary Perry was one of the Three Amigos with this portfolio, did you have any interaction with him?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. I met Secretary Perry when we traveled from -- let me get this in the right order. We attended the Three Seas Initiative Summit. This is an initiative of central European countries that ties in Baltics, Black Sea, and Adriatic countries focused largely on energy diversification, and so, the --

THE CHAIRMAN: When would that have been?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That's what I will find for you. I'm sorry. Just -- there it is. I traveled with the Secretary to Berlin to make up for the trip, he'd have to cancel. We went on to The Hague for Global Entrepreneurship Summit; and then, I was in Brussels for the dinner on June the 4th.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, you're undercutting the lightning round here.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sorry. But this gets right to it. So Secretary Perry was at that dinner, and he was also at the dinner. And we then flew the next morning from Brussels to Ljubljana.

THE CHAIRMAN: So when would that be?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: June the 5th.
THE CHAIRMAN: And during your traveling or meeting with Secretary Perry during this time, did you discuss Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, Gordon Sondland was along with us, and I think there was some general discussion, because we definitely, I recall, this is where I remember the discussion about the need to stockpile and to get the Ukrainian -- this is summer, and they are already thinking ahead to winter. If the Russians turn off the tap at the end of their contracts, will the Ukrainians have stockpiled? And that was an assignment that Secretary Perry was sort of undertaking.

THE CHAIRMAN: During that period when you were traveling with Sondland and Perry, were you present for any conversation, or participate in any conversation with either Sondland or Perry about Burisma, the Bidens, the 2016 -- desire to investigate 2016, did those topics come up in any of those discussions?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not recall anything specific to that. It was really focused on this Three Seas and then moving forward with Zelensky. Gee, didn't he seem like a good guy? I think he's on the right track from the dinner.

THE CHAIRMAN: So you weren't present for any conversations about those other investigative interests of Mr. Giuliani and others?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I don't recall any there. And there was another time --

THE CHAIRMAN: Did Giuliani's name come up at any during that period?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Not -- not that I recall. I can't swear it
didn't in passing, but I don't recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you mentioned you had one other interaction with Secretary Perry.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes, it was later after we were back. And on June 18th, kind of following up all of that, we went over -- Gordon was back in town, so it was Secretary Sondland, Volker, and Ulrich Brechbuhl joined us, and I went, which was probably not usual, because I wasn't doing that much on this with them, but they invited me along, and I was in town, I had an opportunity. So we went over to DOE to Secretary Perry's office to kind of follow up.

THE CHAIRMAN: The date of that, again?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That was June the 18th, according to my calendar. And I just want to --

THE CHAIRMAN: And then in that conversation, did the Bidens, Burisma, 2016, the black ledger, DNC server, any of those issues come up?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No. It was a meeting and a number of other people there. And by that time, Bill Taylor was on the ground in Kyiv, and he came in by conference call. I think he references that in his -- in his prepared statement that was officially or not officially released.

THE CHAIRMAN: And apart from what you've already testified to, did you have any other conversations, or come across any other documents pertaining to an investigation of the Bidens or Burisma or the 2016 election?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: To the best of my knowledge and recollection, only the references in the various press things or references to those discussions, but I'd never seen, that I can recall, any particular documents about those subjects, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you never discussed specific -- you never discussed with either Kent, or Volker, or Sondland, or Perry, or anyone else the desire by Giuliani to investigate the Bidens?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, it was in that oblique -- that's not the right word, it was in the, like, the discussion with Kurt who was trying, as he said, I'm going to try to talk to Rudy to get him refocused on the now, and how we move forward.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did the Bidens come up in that conversation?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: But I don't recall anybody mentioning the Bidens, per se. You know, it was just one of those things it was always out there, because, of course, Giuliani was talking about it and the press was writing about it all the time. And George too, you know, we, in our general discussions, as I have alluded to now many times, he had these four strands of narrative that were coming out, some of these sort of conspiracy theories, and one of them was that.

And so, you know, we would attribute certain things, here comes another press story that's still feeding on that, or is Rudy himself talking about that?

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you participate in a May 16 meeting at State Department with David Hale and Fiona Hill?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yes. That sounds familiar. I think Fiona
came over -- yeah, 3:45 to 4:15 p.m., according to my calendar.

THE CHAIRMAN: And who set up that meeting and what was its purpose?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not sure I can remember. I know I had an email afterwards saying -- where David said, I found that useful, it's good to do just to kind of -- I think we call it a signals check or something. I know she -- I do remember one of the topics was the issue of Gordon, she had had, I think a -- she was frustrated by Gordon's role again, this irregular role. And that certainly came up there. I know at some point. I don't know if it was that early she -- but it may have been them talking about having had a real sort of clash with Gordon, words -- words were exchanged, I think. And I just don't remember the details of that, but it fell into the same category of what I'd raised with Hale over the -- I mean, I guess I had been around about almost 3 months at that point, irregular role.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did Fiona Hill ask whether Sondland had been given a charter to be one of the leads on Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I think that was part of the question. And "P," or, as I know him, David Hale, the Under Secretary, focused that, oh, he seems to have that role. And --

THE CHAIRMAN: So during the meeting, Hale affirmed that at the President's direction, Sondland was, in fact, at least one of the three people in charge of the Ukraine?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I seem to recall, I mean, it would be David's style to say something like, you know, it appears that way, or just
like saying in response to my question, sort of, can you explain to
me this role, and he just said, irregular, isn't it? I don't remember
the specifics of the conversation, but --

THE CHAIRMAN: Is there anything else you do recall about the
collection?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, not --

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q Did you discuss the inaugural delegation to Ukraine that was
going on May 20th, since this was 4 days before?

A We very well could have, because I do remember David asking,

Well, who's going? Because there was a time we thought the Vice

President would go. I knew the Secretary couldn't go. We wanted

high-level participation, that was he, again, showing support, showing

engagement getting off to a good start. Gordon was pushing for that
too. And I knew the Secretary couldn't go. And there was talk at a
certain time that possibly the Vice President would go.

Q Do you know why he ultimately didn't go?

A I don't.

Q Did Dr. Hill express concern about Ambassador Sondland
going?

A I don't remember that specifically, but I -- to me it was,

well, of course Gordon's going to go, that was -- and then I remember --

Q So you --

A -- asking who is going now? And I think I -- I had heard

from the team that they were looking now at Secretary Perry, and that
Kurt would go, and Gordon.

Q. Why was it, of course, that Sondland would go before the May 23rd meeting?

A. Because Sondland was, you know, he was the Zelensky -- he was determined to be -- he was, I am going to lead on this, and underscore his role in working on Ukraine and bringing the Europeans along, being there with others. He was always eager and ready to go to just about anything anywhere in the continent.

Q. And this was just a few days after Mr. Giuliani canceled his much-publicized trip over there, right?

A. I don't recall when that was. I remember the talk about him going and then that he decided not to go, but I don't recall the dates.

Q. Well, if we look at exhibit 1, it's the New York Times article, it is dated May 9th, but we can just flag that for the record.

A. There you go.

MR. GOLDMAN: Mr. Chairman.

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, did you speak with Volker or Kent in advance of their meeting with Zelensky in Toronto?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Well, in the sense -- it depends how you mean. Specifically -- I mean, in advance, I mean, I spoke to them on and off, I saw George Kent almost every day when I was in the office.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you speak about what was going to take place in Toronto? What their message was going to be, that they were going to speak -- that Ambassador Volker was going to speak to Zelensky, what he was going to communicate to in that meeting?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall -- specifically, I knew George was going. Again, there had been questions about who might go. At a time, I thought I might go, it was an opportunity to focus a little more on Ukraine, but it didn't work in the travel schedule, and these guys were handling it so we came to the determination that probably Kurt and George were the right combo for that.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did Ambassador Volker tell you what he planned to discuss with Zelensky before he left for the trip?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall that specifically. The date of that, I know --

THE CHAIRMAN: The conference was, I think, was July 2nd, 3rd.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That sounds right.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did he discuss with you after the conference what he communicated to President Zelensky?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I will take another quick look at our WhatsApp, but I don't think there were any other emails that I don't remember specifically. No, there was nothing in that period.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you ever discuss with Ambassador Volker or Secretary Kent what took place, what was communicated in Toronto to Zelensky?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall specifically doing that.

THE CHAIRMAN: You may have been asked this earlier, if you have, I apologize. Are you familiar with the July 10 meeting at the White House between Yermak, Danylyuk and various U.S. Government officials?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I've seen reference to it. I couldn't tell
you at this moment if it's more contemporary reference recounting it, in terms of all of the news coverage or some of these transcripts or testimony from this process.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did you get a readout about what happened at the meeting after it took place?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't recall that I did. And I don't know that I would have. I don't recall if any of our guys were there, or Kurt was there, or Gordon was there or not.

THE CHAIRMAN: I believe they both were there. But you got no readout from anybody who was present?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Sir, I don't recall any particular readout. Again, I -- you know, I get 1,000 emails a day.

THE CHAIRMAN: I know this was a pretty significant meeting, though, and it's obviously an important part of your portfolio.

There are text messages, Ambassador Volker to Mr. Yermak, before the Trump-Zelensky call, in which Volker communicates to Yermak, Heard from White House as soon as President Z convinces Trump, he will investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016. We will nail down date for visit to Washington. Good luck. Do you know what that was referring to?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I'm not familiar with the text message.

THE CHAIRMAN: No, I'm not asking if you're familiar with the text message. But do you understand what Ambassador Volker was referring to when he said to Yermak, assuming President Z convinces Trump, he will investigate/get to the bottom of what happened in 2016. We will
Ambassador Reeker: I don't know specifically. I mean, based on all of news reporting now, one can assume, but I wasn't aware of the email or the message.

The Chairman: So throughout this process and up until July 25th, which was the date of the call, and the date of his text, Ambassador Volker never told you that he was trying to get President Zelensky to commit to President Trump that he would investigate and get to the bottom of what happened in 2016?

Ambassador Reeker: No.

The Chairman: He never brought that to your attention?

Ambassador Reeker: They were focusing -- I mean, I did not talk to Kurt that often, as you see from the texts. I don't recall anything, you know -- his focus was on trying to move forward on the broad strategy which --

THE CHAIRMAN: The question is how he was trying to move forward with the strategy, and --

Ambassador Reeker: He did not consult with me on his process or his steps in the process.

The Chairman: And were you aware of efforts by either Ambassador Volker or Ambassador Sondland to get President Zelensky to commit to these two investigations, either of these two investigations the President wanted, that of the Bidens, or that of 2016?

Ambassador Reeker: What I was aware was the reference I made that

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Gordon had a script to move forward with Zelensky, but the specifics of that, I was not part of, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: So throughout all the months that Ambassador Sondland was working on this and Ambassador Volker was working on this, neither one ever brought to your attention that they were trying to get President Zelensky to commit to these two investigations the President wanted either before he would get a meeting, or during that call?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, not the specifics of -- you know, it was convincing, you know, as I read to you the idea was to convince the President as I put if, flag POTUS's concern, yeah, to push for reforms, flag POTUS's concern about corruption and poor investment climate, and ensure that Zelensky comes prepared to demonstrate his commitment to reform and improving U.S.-Ukraine bilateral relationship.

THE CHAIRMAN: And you're reading from what now?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: This again is the May 23rd readout that Kurt Volker sent specifically to me.

THE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So you've got this official readout?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Uh-huh.

THE CHAIRMAN: But then you've got this other channel that you're not aware of, in which they are seeking to get a commitment from Zelensky to do these investigations. Is that your testimony that you're aware of the official ask, which you've referenced the memo, but in terms of what Ambassador Volker is talking about in this text message you had no knowledge of that going on?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I did not, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: And did you have any knowledge of comments made by Ambassador Sondland, Ambassador Volker, or others indicating that the military aid itself was being withheld, as a way of getting Ukraine to commit to these investigations? Did that come to your attention?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: No, I mean -- again, in the conversations within the office of George and others, what is holding this up, why Mulvaney is behind this, is that right? How do we push this --

THE CHAIRMAN: In those conversations did someone raise the concern, Hey, is this being done to get Zelensky to do these investigations?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: That supposition, that idea is that is that possible I think was potentially one of things out there. But I had no indication that that was it. Nobody knew, and I -- we kept focusing on pursuing this PCC process because that's the way to get to a real decision.

THE CHAIRMAN: Well, who raised that concern that aid might be withheld for the reason of pressuring Ukraine to do the investigations.

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I couldn't remember if that's something George was talking about. Subsequently, I've seen the references that Bill Taylor made to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: You said somebody contemporaneously had raised this concern. Who was that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I just couldn't tell you. Probably George would be the most likely person, as we looked at the, you know, where
do things stand on a periodic check-in on this, what's holding up? What's happening there? And the focus continued to be we keep pressing forward through this PCC process to try to get this assistance.

THE CHAIRMAN: And after the call, after the July 25th call, were you aware that there was an effort to get President Zelensky to publicly commit to doing these two investigations before he could get a White House meeting? Were you aware of that effort?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I do not recall that specifically, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: You would recall it if Ambassador Volker, or Ambassador Sondland, or someone had told you about it. I assume you'd recall something like that?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Probably. I don't, so I can't -- I can't tell you if it did in the course of everything else.

THE CHAIRMAN: Were you aware that Ambassador Volker was -- a different part of chronology, but are you aware that Ambassador Volker was trying to help arrange a meeting between Giuliani and Yermak in Madrid?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: You know, I've read that since and I -- so I don't -- I do not believe that was the specific -- I think as far as Kurt and I got was that he was trying to, you know -- he was going to talk to Rudy and try to deal with that impediment, that that would perhaps help with the President's attitude towards Ukraine if he could make Rudy understand.

THE CHAIRMAN: But he never told you he was trying to arrange a meeting between Giuliani and Yermak in Madrid?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: I don't remember that specifically, no.

THE CHAIRMAN: Is it fair to say there were a great many things that Ambassador Volker didn't share with you about his efforts, vis-à-vis Rudy Giuliani?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: Yeah, we didn't talk about it much. He -- as I said, he mentioned it. It wasn't a secret, but we weren't in touch regularly. You know, he mentioned that he was going to try to do that. And as this went on, I had my own, wondering what things could be. It was all a little strange. We still didn't have a meeting. We still didn't have the assistance, until we did.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let me ask you, at the end of August, end of August, early September, I think Senator Ron Johnson gave an interview in which he said something to the effect that Sondland had indicated there was a quid pro quo involving a commitment by Ukraine to investigate matters related to 2016 and the frozen aid. Were you aware of that at the time that article came out about that conversation?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I remember reading that. I don't know if you know exactly the date that was.

THE CHAIRMAN: I believe that was August -- interview with Senator Johnson. August 30th, I believe. Did someone bring that article to your attention?

AMBASSADOR REEKER: I -- I just -- I don't recall.

THE CHAIRMAN: Would it have concerned you if Ambassador Sondland had told a U.S. Senator that the aid was being withheld in order to get Ukraine to commit to investigating matters relating to 2016?
AMBASSADOR REEKER: Would it have concerned me? Yes.
[7:03 p.m.]

THE CHAIRMAN: Mr. Goldman.

BY MR. GOLDMAN:

Q I just have one more topic. The NODIS cable that Ambassador Taylor sent to Secretary Pompeo on August 29th --

A Uh-huh.

Q NODIS cables of that -- first-person NODIS cables like that are pretty unusual within the Department. Is that right?

A I mean, they are not the most common, but they're not -- they're not totally unique. I mean, you know.

Q Okay. Well, how many times a year do you think that one of your 50 --

A Ambassadors?

Q -- ambassadors, right -- sent notice cables, first-person like that to the Secretary?

A It would be rare. So, I mean, I'm not trying to be glib.

Q Right.

A I'm just sort of saying it's not unprecedented, but it's certainly unique, by definition.

Q Do you know what the Secretary did with the cable at the time?

A No, I don't.

Q And --

A I, you know, his -- his staff give him stuff to read, so I assumed, as I mentioned, I saw it later.

Q So just to be clear, something that's rare like this within
your portfolio that goes directly to the Secretary, was not brought to your attention at the time?

A I -- August 29th was prior to the Warsaw -- anticipating Warsaw visit. It was kind of a scene setter for that, and laid out, as I think I mentioned, the significance of Ukraine as a security partner.

Q No, I'm just asking whether you think it's unusual if you were not notified of a cable like that within one of your 50 countries?

A You know, whether it came down and was shared, I'm not sure if George saw it or read it.

Q I'm just asking about you.

A Yeah, I would have -- I would have liked to see it. I would have thought that, I mean, Bill might have, sort of, flagged, I'm sending this. But I -- I did not have a communication from Bill at that point. And he was dealing primarily with -- with George inside the Bureau.

But now, I think I'm probably equating what -- what I have read of Bill's testimony that he had met during Ambassador Bolton's visit to Kyiv on that subject.

Q But you affirmatively did not know about this cable when it came in?

A Not -- not that I recall.

Q Okay. You just testified that you travel a fair bit with Secretary Pompeo when he goes to Europe. Is that right?

A When he does European trips, I usually accompany him. Not
always --

Q  Right.

A  -- but I usually accompany him.

Q  So that's a fair bit of time that you end up spending with him over the past 6, 8 months, right?

A  Not that much, I mean, we can go back through it if you look at it. There have been several -- several trips, but they are short. And I don't have that much actual time with him, but, you know --

Q  Did you discuss the Ukraine-related issues with him on any of those trips?

A  No. The only time, in Rome, after all of this happened, we discussed -- at one juncture, I was included in a pre-brief, I think, before an -- either remarks or an interview or something, which I'm not always, and I -- because I mentioned that there was a press report out that said that -- I said to the spokespeople and the Secretary: You may be asked. There's a press report that says you asked Volker to submit his resignation.

And he said: I didn't ask Volker. Volker called me and told me he had to submit his resignation. And he was very disturbed and disappointed about that because, as he said, and I agreed, Kurt was a, you know, he was the guy. He was really crucial to our moving forward on this path, and now we will have to readjust that. So --

Q  Did you get the sense that Secretary Pompeo knew about this irregular channel with Rudy Giuliani, Ambassador Sondland, and Ambassador Volker, and pushing these investigations?
A  He certainly knew about Sondland and Volker leading the
engagement, but --

Q  And what about the investigations that Giuliani wanted?
A  -- no indication.

Q  He never said -- spoke to you about it at all?
A  No, sir.

Q  Was this trip to Rome when the call record came out and the
whistleblower complaint came out, or shortly thereafter?
A  That occurred, I believe, the week before while we were in
New York for the UNGA --

Q  Right.
A  -- and the President was there also. And that is, of course,
when the President had the Zelensky meeting in New York, and Kurt had
emailed -- not emailed, but I think WhatsApp'd me, asking if I could
help get him manifested for that meeting.

And I just said: Well, I passed that to the Secretary's executive
secretary to --

Q  And when you were on that Rome trip, did you discuss this
Ukraine matter at all?
A  We really didn't. The mention I just gave about the -- the
question that he might get. Of course, there was a lot of press
questions at each of his availabilities. And, you know, to be clear,
when we are on these trips, I'm not hanging with the Secretary by any
means.

Q  Are you aware of whether or not the Attorney General was
either in Italy around the time that you were there, or had been shortly before?

A That I learned from press, and I was being asked that by Italians. I know a lot of Italians -- by Italian journalists, and I really don't know anything about that. But I have read about that since, you know. And that question came up at the Secretary's --

Q But you have no personal knowledge of --

A No.

Q -- the Attorney General's trips to Italy at all?

A No.

Q Do you know -- have you come across, since you took over this role, that the two individuals, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman?

A I never came across them personally. I know their names and their connections to Giuliani, and, of course, their recent arrests, but that's been in the news.

Q Did you, prior to their arrests, had you -- were you familiar with their association with Giuliani?

A Yeah, there were press reports, some of those ones that circulated in the vast numbers of --

Q How about other than press reports? Did you come across them in any of your work?

A I don't believe so, no. I've never met them, no.

Q And then finally, earlier today when you were discussing the sort of irregular nature of the arrangement with Ambassador Sondland and Ambassador Volker in response to some questioning from the
minority, you said at one point, you said: I've often wondered -- and then you kind of trailed off and then went to a different question. And I'm just wondering if you remember what you often wondered about this irregular arrangement?

A It was -- it was irregular and you started reading all of these supposed things, and I've -- I've wondered what was really going on. How does this all connect?

You know, I've seen the outrageous smears and attacks against Ambassador Yovanovitch, in particular, George, our embassy, the Foreign Service, in general. We have been called Obama holdovers and deep State whatever, which, of course, is personally offensive having done this for 27 years through one administration to another, regardless of party, and being nonpolitical and focused on, you know, the foreign policy of the United States, and trying to engage, and support our interests, regardless of who the President is.

So that is certainly a personal frustration. Talking to -- you know, I feel responsibility for this large number of people, particularly now that I'm old, long in the tooth, and the younger generations of Foreign Service officers who, with this process and this investigation, I think are really concerned.

The number of people that are at our embassy certainly in Kyiv, but in other places, and in my Bureau who want to know if they need to go hire lawyers.

That's difficult, and trying to know, you know, what is all going on, what might be. You know, you read a lot of different things in
the press. Look, I inherited what I got. I agreed to do this. This was not something I asked for. I left a job I liked very much, I found worthwhile and interesting at the European command.

I was within a 3-hour commute of my wife, and now I'm six time zones away. I travel 50 percent of the time trying to maintain a relationship between the United States and our European partners and allies, which is strained, and help them to look at things in a more holistic long-term way.

I try to bring in historical context. We are at the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, and what we have done together in the three-quarters of a century to bring the transatlantic space that is, you know, stable, peaceful, and has given us a level of prosperity, despite challenges over the years that no one, like my grandfather, who fought in World War II, would have imagined possible.

So, you know, that's what I do every day. I go in there and I deal with all of these things. I get on the United plane in seat 42-G, pray that I can get an upgrade with my points so that I can, you know, fly to Georgia and engage with a brand-new prime minister there and establish a relationship.

You know, I have to manage and try to do this to the best of my ability. That's what I do every day. Ukraine is one piece of that.

I just remind you all that in the course of this period, you know, we have also got Russia, and what they are doing. I've got the Turkey problem set. Do you have any ideas how much time we spend on Turkey, you know?
Acting Assistant Secretary for Europe, I know more about Syria than I would have imagined if I was in the Near East Bureau. You know, trying to follow that, not micromanage. I cannot to take on everything. So I pass on these things.

I have seven great deputies. I inherited a great team and continuity, and I try to provide leadership and engagement to the 50 ambassadors of those countries here in Washington, to our 50 ambassadors and their team around the AOR; to go to the appropriate think tanks, conferences, where these things are discussed to try to tell the story of the United States.

And that's -- I'm sorry to go on, but that's just kind of what I do.

Q Last question. I just want to be sure that we didn't miss any documents that might be particularly relevant to these investigations.

The Biden-Burisma, I don't know whether you or your counsel had a chance to review.

A Did we find the one email? Yes, this was the one that I think -- I think I covered this. This is going back to the Masha, trying to put out a statement March 25th, so exactly a week after I started where we got the word from P, the Under Secretary's office. At 12:04 "P says no statement."

Q Right.

A That was just somebody that asked for that and we couldn't find it. I didn't know where it was.
Q And, once again, you never determined whether -- who that directive came from, or who that decision came from? It was relayed to you by P, but you never --

A It was relayed. It was P staff. "P says," so I was assuming that was him, himself, because his staffer was, again, not sending it to me. He was sending it to the press folks who were pursuing this clearance process.

Q Understood. All right.

A And I said at the top of this -- I think we talked about it -- to Michael, my then acting deputy: Did you reach Masha to let her know that there will not be a statement, essentially?

Q Okay. I have nothing else.

A And in terms of documents, I just, I'm not -- you know, documents have not been provided. I have no authority to do that. So I've --

THE CHAIRMAN: Ambassador, I want to thank you for your testimony today, and we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 7:13 p.m., the deposition was concluded.]